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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT SEX OFFENDERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

BY

©

GLORIA STARKO

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT SEX OFFENDERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY submitted by GLORIA STARKO in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY.

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Date: Dec 29/93

DEDICATION

To Ashley, Jolene and Casey who waited patiently for their mother to look up from the pages of this thesis and simply play.

ABSTRACT

The incidence of adolescent sexual aggression has surfaced in public and professional awareness as a serious problem. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the life experiences of four male adolescent sex offenders.

Phenomenological interviews of the sex offenders in this study encouraged the sharing of their life stories. The subjects were asked to relate "what it was like" for them and were encouraged to recollect early childhood, home, friends, school, self, offensive behaviors and everyday experiences of their choosing. The emphasis was on thoughts, feelings, perceptions and meanings of experience related to personal backgrounds and sexual offences.

A hierarchal analysis of transcribed interviews generated ten descriptive themes that were common to the four participants. The ten themes that emerged were as follows: 'An Unloved Child', 'A Sad Child', 'A Devalued Child', 'A Bewildered Child', 'A Lonely Child', 'A Helpless Child', 'A Fearful Child', 'A Defended Child', 'An Embittered Child' and 'A Child With Longing'.

Results of this study suggest that quality of parental care was significant in the experiences of these youths and emphasizes the importance of parent-child relations in understanding adolescent sex offenders. A developmental perspective was identified as a viable direction for future research and treatment considerations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PHENOMENON

There are many atrocities that befall man in his innocence and his guilt but few that generate the disdain that accompanies sexual violation. The very actions that perpetuate life and speak of human love and intimacy become the seeds of betrayal in a twist that touches the core of human vulnerability. Though it is sexual abuse that I refer to, it is the perpetrator of the abuse that has become the subject of my attention in this research project.

Sexual assault carries with it a public outrage and a fear that one may fall prey to the most intimate of violations. When the object of sexual abuse is a child, assaultive behaviors become near inconceivable. Confusion, disdain and a desire for retaliation mark the societal response. When the perpetrator is, himself, a child on the threshold of adulthood, the issue becomes more complex. Responsibility and blame do not rest as easily on the youthful perpetrator. The target for retaliation is not so clearly defined. An ambivalence emerges in the responsibility to care for our troubled youth yet protect those children against whom they violate.

Few people understand the sex offender and fewer are inclined to try, thus the mysteries of this phenomenon remain largely unrevealed. Researchers and clinicians have contributed to information about sex offenders however, as a society, we have seen little success in terms of prevention of sex offenses in the ultimate goal of safety within our communities. Public awareness that a large number of sex offenses (predominantly those involving child-victims) are committed by adolescents, has lead to the concern that very little is known about them. Most of the research pertaining to sex offenders has centered on the adult offender. There is a need for research into the phenomenon of the adolescent who commits sexual offenses. This study represents my efforts to contribute to a better understanding of these youths.

For myself, the question arises as to whether the young offender is both victim and perpetrator. The child, dependent on his environment for emotional and physical support, has not yet achieved the status of adulthood or the competence and self-sufficiency it presumes. The adolescent rests somewhere in between. The question arises, what does this youth know of life? What is 'seen' in a reflection of a childhood almost past? Within what context has he grown and developed? What is the lived experience of the adolescent sex offender? These questions are the focus of this study. Four male adolescent sex offenders have attempted to answer them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In studying human behavior we can seek to understand that which is healthy, creative and productive. We can search for the facilitators of healthy development. As we look within ourselves and the community within which we live, we may recognize a delicate balance between health and sickness. We may become increasingly aware that a life which is strong in potential is also fragile and susceptible. It becomes important to understand the 'ills' in order to protect against them.

The study of deviance has thus become significant in the ultimate goal of achieving health. Behaviors which are destructive and harmful become the subjects of interrogation in the context of human science research. Sexual abuse has been identified as one such destructive element.

With a growing awareness that sexual abuse can have a lasting, harmful effect and is prevalent within our communities, comes a desire to learn more about the perpetrators of this violation, many of whom are youth. There is little known about adolescent sex offenders. In the following pages some of what is known about this population is summarized.

Adolescent Sex Offenders As A Serious Problem

In Canada, at the national level, one in four sex offenders is an adolescent (Mathews, 1987). Mathews further reported that, in Ontario, between 1979 and 1984, nearly 1400 people between the ages of 16 and 19 were convicted of one or more sexual offenses. In metropolitan Toronto alone 151 adolescents (149 males and 2 females) ranging in age from 12 to 17 were charged with sexual offenses in 1985, A population survey done for the Badgley Committee on sexual Offences Against Children in 1984, found that almost one third of suspected or known child sex offenders were under the age of 21 (Health and Welfare Canada, 1990). American crime statistics indicate that over one-half of child molestations and one-third of rapes are committed by males less than 18 years of age (Kosky, 1989).

Though these statistics are alarming they are most likely an underestimate of actual occurrences. According to the Department of Health and Welfare, Canada (1990) sexually assaultive behaviors by adolescents is so vastly underreported that the few figures which do exist significantly under-represent the extent of the problem. Several reasons are cited for this under-representation. Until recently adolescent sex offenders were usually handled as assault charges rather than as sexual offences. Arrest records are, thus, not an accurate representation of the actual extent of the problem. Sexually abusive acts committed by adolescents are often downplayed or dismissed as sexual curiosity or experimentation. Professionals called upon to intervene in these cases often minimize the behavior rather than treat it as a sexually deviant offence. The desire to protect the adolescents from what has often been viewed as a harmful label, extends into the criminal justice system. Plea bargaining has allowed adolescent offenders to plead to simple assault, or even property crime, rather than be convicted of a sexual offence. Victims are hesitant to disclose assaults because of fears, of their parents' reaction, of being stigmatized, of being blamed for the incident, or of possible reprisals by the offender. Sex offenders, by rarely referring themselves for treatment, further impede the process of identification.

Retrospective American studies of adult offenders reveal that deviant sex careers often begin in adolescence (Groth, Longo & McFadin, 1982). They studied a sample of adjudicated sex offenders in a state hospital and found that the majority had begun their sexually deviant behaviors as early as seven years of age and had progressed from less serious to more serious offenses. Abel (1984) hypothesized that the average adolescent offender could be expected to commit 380 sexual crimes during his lifetime, based on data from adult offenders who began committing offenses as adolescents.

Mathews and Stermac (1989) in a Canadian survey of adolescent sex offenders in Toronto, concluded that almost one in three sex offenders can be expected to re-offend. A particularly disturbing finding of this study was that 14.8% of the offenses occurred outside on school property or inside the school in unsupervised areas during regular hours. This draws attention to the threat to student safety. Also of concern was the finding that 25% of reported incidents involved perpetrators under the age of 12 years.

These studies identify the area of adolescent sex offending as problematic. In addition, they point to the necessity of identifying and treating young perpetrators as potential risks to themselves and to the community.

Characteristics and Typologies

All economic groups, all levels of intelligence, all races and all religions are represented in the backgrounds of adolescent sex offenders (Department of Health and Welfare Canada, 1990). No single profile exists that describes all male adolescent sex offenders, however, identifying some of the characteristics which appear common is worthwhile in better understanding the phenomenon.

Stermac and Mathews (1987) compiled demographic information related to sex offender and sex offense characteristics on 349 adolescents and 438 incidents reported to Metropolitan Toronto Police between 1984 and 1986. They determined that 98% of the total offenders were male. The finding that the vast majority of sex offenders are male has been supported by other researchers (Reinhart, 1987; Ryan & Lane, 1991). It has been suggested the female sexual offenders have been under-identified due to male hesitation to report violations and the acceptability of female's role as caretaker in handling particularly young children. Though there are probably more female offenders than current research suggests, the vast majority of abusers who have been identified are male.

Reinhart (1987) found that more males than females were victims of adolescent child molestation. Stermac and Mathews (1989) found that 87% of the victims of adolescent sex offenders were female as compared to their prior finding in 1987 of 67%. Their studies did not differentiate between child molesters and other typologies. Awad and Saunders (1988) found that, in their sample of 29 adolescent child molesters, just over half had male victims.

Awad and Saunders (1988) collected data on 100 male adolescent sex offenders referred to the Toronto Family Court between 1980 and 1987. Sample characteristics included the following. One-third of the subjects lived with single-parent mothers. The majority showed disturbances in school adjustment, peer relationships and psychological adjustment. Over one-half were of average intelligence. Child molesters were more likely to have had chronic severe learning difficulties and to be socially isolated. With reference to the nature of the offenses, they noted that it was difficult to establish details of offenses due to the widespread use of denial by the boys and often their parents. Denial varied from refusing to admit culpability, disputing details, minimizing the meaning of the assault or blaming the victim for provoking the assault. This study involved interviews with families however it is striking that very little data was collected on family characteristics or dynamics. Only eight items on a 401-item multiple choice type questionnaire pertained to parent-child relations. This remains an area that has not been well researched.

In a study conducted by Katz (1990), adolescent child molesters were compared with non-delinquents and non-sex offending delinquents on measures of social competence and psychological adjustment. The molesters reported more problems with loneliness, assertiveness, social anxiety, negative evaluation, self-consciousness, depression and low self-esteem. They showed more global psychological maladjustment and tended to display an external attributional style which could help to lower internal inhibitions. Molesters seemed more easily threatened by male-female relationships. Other researchers have concluded that difficulties such as immaturity, low self-esteem and social skills problems are prevalent amongst adolescent sex offenders who commit a variety of sex offenses (Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky & Deisher, 1986).

In summary, the majority of adolescent sex offenders identified are males having either male ore female child-victims.

Some common themes that have been identified are social skills deficits, academic difficulties, low self-esteem, loneliness, problems with peer relations and overall psychological maladjustment. Denial is common amongst sex offenders. There is little data available on family characteristics or dynamics.

Etiological Considerations

The Theories:

Criminologists have presented many theories to explain delinquent and criminal behavior. A brief review of the theories will be presented as they have to some extent, influenced speculation on sex offending in particular. Geenwood and Zimring (1985) identify six theories concerning the development of criminal behavior.

1. *Strain theory* , developed by Cohen, 1955, holds that although lower-class males claim middle-class aspirations and goals, their inability to compete effectively in schools and for jobs, because of their inadequate socialization, leads to loss of self esteem and delinquent drift. It is worthy of note that sex offenders are represented in all economic groups (Department of Health and Welfare Canada, 1990). For this reason, in my view, this theory does not appear useful in explaining sexually offensive behaviors.

2. *Control theory* , developed by Hirschi, 1969, holds that humans are naturally anti-social and that a failure of the socialization process (primarily in families) leads to delinquent behavior. This failure causes lack of social competence and achievement and contributes to strain. Socialization is facilitated by bonds between individual and society. The four elements of these bonds are attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

3. *Social learning theory* (Bandura, 1977) suggests that behavior is acquired and maintained through processes of direct observation, experimentation, and positive and negative reinforcement. Behaviors are copied and then encouraged or discouraged by whether they result in positive or negative reinforcement. Social learning theory provides another explanation of how inadequate or incompetent parenting contributes to later

delinquency. This theory has made a significant contribution in speculation related to sexual offenders. For example, it has been suggested that exposure to aberrant sexual experiences on the part of parents contributes to the child's learning of inappropriate sexual behaviors (Ryan & Lane, 1991). This theory has also encouraged the consideration of family and other learning environments as significant etiological factors.

4. *Psychoanalytic theory* (Freud,1963) suggests that parental behavior during the earliest stages of child's development can lead to aberrant behavior. It emphasizes the continuing effects of stressful incidents and trauma experienced in early childhood on the unconscious mind. Freud's theory has a significant impact on both research and treatment related to sex offenders. For example, the extensive use of ego-defense mechanisms have been identified in sex offenders. Early childhood experience is considered significant in etiological considerations.

5. *Biological theories* developed by Mednick and Volavka, 1980, describe how various physical endowments or deficits may interfere with normal socialization or learning processes. To some extent, biological and physical endowments are inherited from parents and further influenced by physiological factors. The strength of these influences has not yet been determined. The influence of biological theories can be seen in the measurement of sexual arousal in sex offenders (Becker, Hunter, Stein and Kaplan, 1989).

6. *Criminal personality theory,* developed by Yochelson and Samenow, 1976, describes the cognitive processes that may contribute to continuing criminal behavior, and these are clearly influenced by preceding histories. Because none of the theories that assign the cause of crime to early socialization processes or physical endowments explain all of the variation in criminal behavior, individual cognitive processes must play an important role in the continuation or cessation of criminal activity. It has been suggested that cognitive processes and distortions play a significant role in perpetuation of a cycle of abuse. This hypothesis has been examined by Lane (1991) who describes cognitive processes in the context of a

cycle of abuse which has been modified to adolescent sex offenders (see section ' a developmental perspective', this chapter).

In consideration of etiological factors related to delinquent and criminal behaviors, a brief overview of theories has been presented. These have influenced the direction of research and treatment in relation to delinquency and criminality. The further categorization of specific criminal types, such as sex offenders, has lead to speculation specific to this group of individuals. The following is a summary of research findings relevant to etiological considerations concerning adolescent sex offenders.

The Research:

Many researchers have minimized the seriousness of sexual offenses by male adolescents describing their behavior as innocent sex play, experimentation, or suggesting that the offenses were due to the normal aggressiveness of sexually maturing adolescents (Finklhor,1979; Roberts, Abrams & Finch,1973, as cited in Johnson, 1988). However Longo and Groth (1983) insisted that sex offenses not be dismissed as adolescent adjustment reaction.

Sexual arousal measurement has been one of the hallmarks of work with sexual offenders in an attempt to assess sexual response to various stimuli. Becker, Hunter, Stein and Kaplan (1989) attempted to determine what factors are associated with sexual arousal to age-inappropriate stimuli in an adolescent offender population, using direct measurement of penile erection response. Results indicated that history of sexual abuse was associated with more deviant erectile responding in those adolescents who had molested boys. No significant findings in relation to other studied factors (admit/deny, history of physical abuse, history of non-sexual arrests, incest/non-incest) were forthcoming.

Studies directed at measurement of sexual arousal have been criticized. Marshall and Barbaree (1990) have suggested that availability of technology to measure arousal superseded the utility of doing so. They further suggest that the basic underlying assumption that socially inappropriate response may be considered as deviancy has been overstated. In my view, studies of this nature appear narrow in focus and rest on the assumption that offenders involvement in sexual activity is motivated by a need for sexual satisfaction. In addition, they appear less than helpful in understanding sex offenders or identifying practical areas for treatment.

One common assumption about adolescents who commit sex offenses is that the sexual acting out represents one feature of their general psychological and social maladjustment. Research indicates that behavioral problems are often present in the histories of adolescent sex offenders (Becker, Cunningham-Rathner and Kaplan,1986; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monstersky and Deisher, 1986). Another common assumption about sex offenders in general and adolescent sex offenders in particular, is that they suffer various social deficits that predispose them to victimize others sexually (Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky and Deisher, 1986). In summarizing theoretical concepts that attempt to explain why some people molest children, Finkelhor (1984) includes social skills deficits under the broad explanation of "blockage". Blockage theorists suggest that sex offenders are somehow blocked in there ability to get their sexual and emotional needs met in appropriate peer relationships and therefore choose alternative victimizing avenues for need fulfillment.

O'Brien (1991) studied 170 adolescent male sex offenders (mean age 15.2) who had been referred for evaluation and treatment at an outpatient mental health clinic in Minnesota. The sample was further subdivided into four groups on the basis of primary sexual offending behavior (sibling offenders, non-sibling child offenders, offenders who victimized peers or adults, and adolescents who had multiple victims including two or more of the other group criteria). He found that the majority of the adolescents (55%) had some previous involvement with psychotherapy or counselling. He further found that, compared with normal peers, adolescent sex offenders were less sexually experienced. In his study sample fewer admitted to having non-exploitive sexual intercourse prior to their offense (32%) as compared to a group of similar age non-sex offenders (47%) O'Brien indicated that, in keeping with the blockage theory, it would be expected that teenage sex offenders in his sample would be less sexually experienced than their peers and generally less well socialized. He found that child molesters were least likely to have been sexually active with peers, followed by sibling offenders and then non-child offenders. O'Brien suggests that one possible explanation for the lower rate of child molesters may be the degree of social functioning among the adolescent sex offenders. He indicated that 54% of the total sample were considered undersocialized (had few peer aged friends; poor social skills) 36% as somewhat socialized (some appropriate peer relations; adequate social skills) and 11% as anti-socialized (affiliations primarily with delinquent youth). Adolescents who sexually abused children, either within or outside the family, were assessed as more undersocialized than those who committed sex offenses against peers or adults. O'Brien suggests that perhaps incest offenders and child molesters lack the social skills to have meaningful involvement with peers. They subsequently seek out younger children or siblings available to them who serve as substitutes for more desired peer partners.

Awad and Saunders (1988) assessed the role of drug and alcohol abuse, anti-social traits, disinhibition, peer-group influence, psychopathology and sexual deviance in 29 male adolescent child molesters. Although none of these factors, taken independently, could explain the causes of child molestation by adolescents, anti-social traits and psychological maladjustment were indicated as motivating factors for sexual offenses. Alcohol and/or drug abuse and peer group were found to be insignificant. They found that immaturity and other psychological maladjustments lead to poor judgement and impulse control which lead to child molestation. Describing sexual offenders by psychopathology was found to be unhelpful due to overlap of categories and the observation that the majority of adolescents showing similar disorders do not commit sex offenses. Sexual deviance (defined as offense planning, preoccupations, statements) was insignificant.

Other risk factors have been identified and include, easy access to would-be victims, poor parental supervision, history of impulsiveness and family violence and prior sexual victimization.

(Becker & kaplan, 1988, Davis & Leitenberg, 1987, as cited in O'Brien, 1991).

In searching for causes of juvenile sex offending, clinicians and researchers are suggesting early childhood victimization as one contributing factor (Groth, 1979; Seghorn, Prenky & Boucher, 1986) Empirically controlled research, surveying adult offenders retrospectively, does not unequivocally support these assertions although findings do suggest a linkage between prior victimization and subsequent perpetration (Langevin & Lang, 1985). Groth & Loredo (1981) note that more that half of the incarcerated juvenile offenders studied had themselves been victims of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse while Awad and Saunders (1988) found that one-quarter of their adolescent sample had a previous history of sexual abuse. Lang and Langevin (1991) who studied adult sexual offenders found that one-third to one-half of the subjects were physically and/or sexually abused as children. O'Brien (1991) indicated that 38% of the male adolescent sex offenders in his study disclosed that they had been sexually abused. Notably, sibling incest offenders had the highest rate of prior sexual victimization (42%). These rates are significant compared to a similar aged population of male non-offenders. Only 3% of this group disclosed being victims of sexual abuse. (Resnick, 1987, as cited in O'Brien 1991). It should be noted that being sexually abused is an admission not all individuals are prepared to make, whether they are offenders or non-offenders.

Family environment and management practices have been implicated in the development of sexually delinquent behavior. General level of functioning was assessed in the families of 170 adolescent sex offenders using a family health assessment guide (O'Brien, 1991). Nearly half of all families were judged to be severely disturbed in those adolescents who had offended against younger children. O'Brien suggests that family disturbance may play an important role in the psychological or social development of the male adolescent that pre-disposes him to molest children. For instance, family dysfunction might lead to arrested emotional or psychological development, low self-worth and social skills deficits, possibly putting these teens at greater risk to act out sexually with younger children. Becker and Kaplan (1988) summarized extant literature and concluded that exposure to family violence, neglect or physical abuse may be implicated in the etiology of sexually delinquent behavior. It was reported by Van Ness (1984) that 41% of the adolescent sex offenders in his sample had experienced intra-familial violence or neglect during childhood.

Parent-child relations are an important consideration in determining family dynamics. Parent-child relations is an area that appears to have been neglected in studies pertaining to adolescent sex offenders. In my view, it is not a preferred area of concentration due to it's complexity and the difficulty in obtaining quantifiable data. Several researchers have, however, contributed to empirical findings in this area.

Authors have reported disturbed parent-child relationships among sex offenders generally. Langevin & Lang (1985) reported that sex offenders who preferred immature partners scored lowest of all sex offender groups on 'Mother Affection' and highest on 'Mother Strictness' on the Clarke Parent-child Questionnaire (PCR). Overall, offenders who preferred immature partners were more likely to report disturbed mother relationships.

Christie, Marshall, and Lanthier (1979) found that pedophiles and rapists were more likely to have been brought up by mothers alone, or by someone other than their natural parents. In addition, in their sample of offenders who were incarcerated in a maximum security penitentiary, 31% of the pedophiles reported frequent violent beatings and another 15% had been subjected to excessive punitive discipline. Langevin, Day, Handy & Russen (1985) compared pedophiles and controls with incest offenders using the Clarke Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire. Results showed that incest offenders and pedophiles were similar in their parent-child relations. Mothers were reported to be stricter and less affectionate than were controls' mothers and they identified less with them. Pedophiles reported that their mothers were more aggressive than did the other two groups. These findings suggest that the disturbance in parent-child relations of pedophiles and incest offenders involves predominantly the mother, though both offender groups reported less father affection and identification.

Father relations have been implicated as significant in research with sex offender groups. Langevin, Wright & Handy (1989) found that sexually abused sex offenders as opposed to offenders who did not report a history of sexual abuse, showed more disturbance in father-son relationships. Father was considered unaffectionate, strict, incompetent and lacking indulgence toward his child. Lang and Langevin (1991) investigated the role of the father specifically in relation to offenders who used aggression in their offences. The groups included pedophiles and incest offenders. Contrary to expectation, parent-child relations contributed little to the presence or absence of force in the child abuse offenses. They did, however find that physically abused sex offenders showed trends to significance in relation to father scales on the PCR. The PCR results in this study showed that there are clinically significant disturbances in father-son relationships of sex offenders who offend against children. Although this study did not show a relationship between offender violence toward child victims and parent-child relations it did reinforce the earlier findings that suggest parent-child disturbances leave residual difficulties in sex offenders as adults. In my view an important consideration in terms of reported use of violence in child molestations, may be victim response. The victim who shows less overt opposition to the assault may be unknowingly discouraging the use of violence in an otherwise potentially violent offender. For this reason differentiation based on use of violence may prove to be problematic in arriving at significant research findings.

In summary, the literature on adolescent sex offenders suggests a number of etiological factors that may have significance. Amongst these are family functioning, social adjustment, school performance, social skills, psychological factors, deviant sexual arousal and experience as a victim of physical and/or sexual abuse. Many factors have been investigated in an attempt to discover some link which might explain sexually abusive behavior. To date, research in the area has not revealed any one factor which can explain the behavior of the sex offender. It is important to recognize that many factors interact and contibute to sexually assaultive behavior. Poor socialization exemplified in a lack of social skills as well as a history of family abuse appearto be a dominant themes in research findings pertaining to child molesters. Frustrated efforts to achieve success in the academic domain and in relationships with peers are also important areas of consideration. In my view, the areas identified as problematic for these youths and the nature of their offenses largely point to difficulties in interpersonal relationships. It, thus, is important, in my view, to understand the environment within which these youth have grown. What have they experienced in terms of relationships within their families of origin? What has been their learning in this regard? The present study is designed to investigate these issues.

Studies focussing on parent-child relations have identified problematic relationships in the families of these youths, however family dynamics have not been comprehensively researched in relation to adolescent sex offenders. Preferred areas of study have centered on more readily measurable factors and, in my view, have thus touched only the surface rather than achieving any depth of understanding.

A Developmental Perspective

Developmental perspectives in relation to adolescent sex offenders have, for the most part, been derived from clinical experience. Qualitative research, employing specific methodologies appears to be lacking. As such, views of practitioners who offer a more 'qualitative' understanding derived from clinical experience will be presented.

It is the hypothesis of Steele and Ryan (1991) that the origins of sexually exploitive behaviors lie in the early childhood experiences of the offenders. They believe that exploration of early life experience can point to those factors that create the risk of major dysfunction in intimate relationships. They suggest that the most pervasive common element in those who maltreat children is the feeling of not have been adequately cared for or loved in an emotional sense. The child who experiences significant family disruption is left with low self-esteem, an empty yearning dependency, a wish for love, care and respect and an identification with the uncaring or absent parent.

Steele and Ryan offer a sexualized model of compensation based on clinical experience. Clarification is provided through the presentation of representative case study material. In their view, three main threads of development can be traced that may lead to pedophilic behavior; empty yearning and low self-esteem left over from early disregard or disruption in care, lack of empathic modelling and sexualization of attempts to overcome inner conflict. Steele and Ryan indicate that in normal development a child's needs for empathic care, closeness, intimacy and a sense of self follow a separate line from that of sexuality. For some, however, there may be a merging of the two desires or drives during childhood with sexuality being used to replace the ability to be truly intimate and to establish a sense of identity. Pedophilic behavior in both adolescent and adult life may be the attempt to satisfy, through sexual activity, the emptiness and yearning of early childhood experience.

Research into the developmental factors associated with sexual deviance has lagged behind clinical knowledge however assumptions of clinicians have seen some tentative validation. (Gilgun,1988; Prentky et al,1989, as cited in Ryan & Lane 1991) Gilgun found that lack of a confidant and a non- normative sexual environment were significant variables in the early childhood experience of sex offenders. Prentky et al indicated that sexual and non-sexual aggression in an adult sample were related to distinct aspects of developmental history. Caretaker inconsistency was related to the amount of sexual aggression and sexual deviation in the family was related to increased sexual aggression.

Lane (1991) describes a sexual abuse cycle which has been modified to juvenile offenders. She proposes that childhood experiences that engender feelings of helplessness and abandonment may be precursors to sexually abusive behavior. Briefly, the juvenile is responding to an event that triggers negative self-perceptions and feelings of helplessness. His experience and personal view of the world influences perceptions of events. The initial perception is based on a victim-stance orientation; he assumes the future will be similar to the past and thus unsafe. After attempting to avoid the expected outcome he attempts to exert power over others in both sexual and non-sexual ways. This is a compensatory response in that it counters the perception of inadequacy and helplessness. He subsequently assimilates the behavior through a series of thinking errors.

According to Lane, frequently described events that elicit the juvenile's experience of powerlessness include abandonment, physical/emotional abuse, sexual victimization, rejection, humiliation, loss, alienation or betrayal. The precipitating past experiences are perceived as under control when power is temporarily regained through involvement in the offense. Current events trigger dysfunctional responding for adolescent sex offenders, according to Lane. As the response style is repeated misperceptions appear more frequently and more types of events remind the individual of the original painful situation. The most consistently identified feelings are those of helplessness and perceived abandonment. Feelings of smallness and inadequacy are thus perpetuated. Gradually these feelings are replaced by anger as attempts to alleviate these feelings are unsuccessful. Modifications of the sexual abuse cycle represent a description of process rather than a causal relationship. It is presented as a cycle due to the repetitive nature of the behavior sequence. This model points to the childhood experiences of the offender as significant and attempts to understand the offender from the perspective of prior childhood experience that is triggered in the everyday experience of the present.

Is there something about the period of adolescence which contributes to responses such as those described above? Marshall and Barbaree (1990) propose that the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors during childhood set the stage for the developing male to respond to the onset of strong desires characteristic of pubescence, with a pro-social or anti-social mental set. They suggest that early developmental experiences of boys, who later become sex offenders, may have contributed to a lack of inhibitory controls that are exercised by those who were better prepared for the dramatic change in bodily functioning that accompanies adolescence. They suggest that inadequate attachment bonds in the experience of adolescent sex offenders contributes to an inability to form intimate relationships. It is worthy of emphasis that the development of a strong identity is seen as the foremost task of adolescence (Erickson, 1963). Marshall and Barbaree suggest that adolescent sex offenders experience feelings of social inadequacy and lack of confidence. In their view, earlier developmental experiences may further serve to instill strong feelings of resentment and hostility.

In summary, a developmental perspective focuses on the feelings, thoughts and behaviors that predispose the adolescent to sexually abusive responses. The context within which the adolescent has grown, is considered to be of utmost importance for etiological speculations. A developmental perspective focuses on a deep level of understanding and is not concerned with simply describing an end product; the adolescent sex offender as he appears in the present.

Sibling Incest

The topic of sibling incest has been given important consideration in the context of the present study for two reasons. Firstly, one of the participants in this research has been identified as a sex offender as a result of incestuous relationships with siblings. Secondly, it has been noted that the perpetrators of sibling incest are predominantly adolescents. De Jong (1989) found that the mean age of sibling perpetrators was 15.5 years. Pierce and Pierce (1987) found the mean age to be 14.1 years.

There has been an explosion of publications over the past two decades on the subject of family sex abuse, reflecting societies awareness and recognition of problems previously hidden under a veil of secrecy and denial. Father-daughter incest has been the focus of most literature however sibling incest is considered to be a prevalent type of incestuous behavior (Finkelhor, 1980). Research literature on family sex abuse has largely ignored sibling incest, dismissing it as sex play that is exploratory, mutually consenting and benign in it's effects on later psychological, social or sexual development. There has been a failure to distinguish between sexual acts engaged in by mutually consenting near same age siblings and sexual behavior that is clearly exploitive (ie. where there is a significant age difference or where force, violation or intimidation is employed). Serious long term effects resulting from brother-sister incest have been clearly identified. (Cole, 1990 as cited in O'Brien 1991). Defining an exploitive relationship as one which involves a 5 year or greater difference between victim and perpetrator and/or use of force, threat or authority, De Jong (1989) found that 86% of sibling incest was clearly abusive or exploitive in nature. Becker, Kaplan, Cunningham-Rathner and Kavoussi (1986) describe 22 adolescent males who had been charged with sex crimes against family members. Though no unified profile of an adolescent incest offender emerged from the data, they suggest that sexual experimentation is not a very useful explanation for incest behavior. These studies emphasize that sibling incest should not be presumed to be natural sexual exploration.

One study focussed on identifying demographic, sexual, individual and family factors that differentiate male adolescent sibling incest offenders from other types of adolescent sex offenders. (O'Brien 1991). One hundred-seventy male adolescent sex offenders were divided into four groups; sibling offenders, non-sibling child offenders, those who victimized peers or adults and adolescents with multiple victims, which included two or more of the other victim criteria. Compared with the other adolescent sex offenders, sibling offenders admitted to committing more sexual crimes, reported longer offender careers and generally engaged in more intrusive sexual behaviors (penetration). Victim availability and duration of abuse were offered as explanation for the finding that sibling offenders were more likely to engage in sexual intercourse with their victims than non-sibling offenders. De Jong (1989) also noted that use of intrusive measures characterized his sample of 35 sibling offenders. He further indicated that in all cases sibling abuse ocurred within the home and was disclosed only after multiple incidents. Despite these findings, O'Brien reports that sibling incest offenders were the least likely of the offender types to be adjudicated for their offenses. He suggests that child protection services, rather than the criminal justice system, has traditionally taken responsibility for this population.

With regard to victim information, most children were of school age. Both O'Brien (1991) and De Jong (1989) found that the majority of victims were under the age of 9. Most victims were female though in one study of 22 male adolescent incest offenders, a large number (44%) were male (Pierce & Pierce, 1987). O'Brien noted that sibling incest offenders were more likely than the other groups to have two or more victims. Non-sibling child molesters were equally as likely to have siblings in the home as were incest offenders yet they chose their victims from outside the family. This suggests that other factors, besides availability of siblings in the home, are crucial in determining whether sexual behaviors between siblings will occur.

O'Brien reported that sibling incest offenders had serious deficits in social skills compared to a non-clinical population of teens. School performance was problematic for all groups with incest offenders showing only slightly more problems that the other groups. Pierce and Pierce (1987) showed similar findings in their sample of 37 juvenile incest offenders, indicating that 49% of the subjects experienced academic difficulties with 38% having serious enough problems to warrant placement in special classes. They described behavioral problems in this population (ie shoplifting, vandalism, running away). Almost one-third were identified as exhibiting behavioral problems at school. They indicated that aggressiveness with peers and/or family members was apparent in most of the subjects.

Reference has been made to the troubled nature of incest families. O'Brien reported that sibling incest offenders were found to be from the most dysfunctional families, those having the highest rates of physical and or sexual abuse. Sixty-one percent of the incest offenders experienced physical abuse as compared to 45% of child molesters and 37% of non-child offenders.

A previously existing incestuous family culture does not appear to be a sufficient causal factor in sibling incest. Early studies suggest that paternal incest may be a causative factor for sibling incest by sexualizing the children prematurely and modelling exploitive sexual behavior for sons (Magal and Winnec, 1968 as cited in O'Brien, 1991). In O'Brien's study, the incest group was more likely than any other group to have been sexually victimized by their fathers or other relatives however only a minority of sibling offenders (42%) had a prior experience of sexual abuse within the family. There was some evidence for the transmission of the incest dynamic, as a significantly higher proportion of sibling offenders' parents reported being victims of sexual abuse. O'Brien suggests that patterns of denial and minimization may have persisted in guarding against recognition of sibling abuse.

Pierce and Pierce (1987) report similar findings in relation to incidence of prior sexual victimization in adolescent incest offenders. In addition they report that 70% of sex offenders in their sample had been neglected. A large percentage of the mothers (45%) were considered emotionally ill and 25% of the father's were seen as mentally ill based on psychiatric diagnosis. A large number of subjects (statistics not given) were from female headed single parent homes.

In De Jong's study (1989) 83% of the sibling incest victims lived in single parent homes. De Jong suggests that in this setting the stated or implied authority of older children as second caretakers or babysitters could promote the pressuring of younger children into sexual activities. The supervision of younger children by the perpetrator was implied in many cases. Physical or emotional absence of one or both parents is suggested to play a significant role in intensifying the mutual dependency and sexual curiosity of brothers and sisters.

The literature is replete with reference to the pathological nature of incest families. O'Brien (1991) describes these families as having role reversals, blurred generational and interpersonal boundaries and dysfunctional communication styles. A lack of supervision was considered to be a consistent factor among the families. Sgroi (1982) indicates that incest is fostered by a home environment that fails to protect the child. Such a family provides poor supervision or a poor choice of surrogate caretaker. In addition, there may be a failure to set appropriate sleeping arrangements and role boundaries.

Incest or intrafamilial sex abuse is the product of complex factors and interactions involving the victim, the perpetrator and the environment. As researchers have pointed out, there are differences between adolescent incest offenders and adolescent sex offenders in general. From my observation in reviewing the literature, these appear to be more in degree rather than kind. Family environment appears to play a significant role, and as in the case of other adolescent sex offenders, there is a large degree of family dysfunction present.

Final Comment

To date, research has focussed on a number of factors that surround the adolescent sex offender. These include, a history of problematic family and peer relationships, prior victimization, inappropriate socialization, psychological difficulties and school adjustment problems. There have been no studies that attempt to describe the lived experience of the adolescent sex offender. What has the adolescent sex offender experienced in his life? What does he see in a reflection of a childhood almost past? In what context has he grown and developed? What is his lived experience? These questions are the focus of the present research project. In the chapters that follow, subjective descriptions given by adolescent sex offenders provide material for understanding. My choice of a phenomenological approach in researching the adolescent sex offender is an attempt to contribute to the qualitative information regarding this population.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To better understand the experience of the adolescent sex offender, a qualitative methodology has been chosen because of it's emphasis on understanding the meaning of experience. This study uses a phenomenological method. This differs from natural science methods that dominate research in mainstream psychology. Some of these differences and important considerations related to phenomenological research methodology, comprise the content of this chapter.

Foundations of the Methodology

The phenomenological approach to research is based on existential-phenomenological thought, which has it's origins in both phenomenology and existential philosophy (Valle & King, 1978). An important philosophical difference between phenomenological research and natural science research involves the existential-phenomenological view that we are in and of the world (Colaizzi, 1978). The phenomenologist views the world as coconstitutional. What is meant by this is that people and things have an interrelated connectedness in the life-world. "It is each individual's existence that gives his or her world it's meaning (Valle & King, 1978, p.8). The meaning of an individual's existence emerges only within the context of the world and vice versa. From this view point, patterns of relationships rather than causes are important to the phenomenologist. This represents a fundamental difference from the orientation of the natural scientist who believes in the discreteness of objects and their causal relationship. As such, in the natural science approach, an attempt is made to isolate the particular objects or variables under study from other variables that may confound the results. In phenomenological research, variables are not isolated and predefined. Rather, the phenomenologist searches openly for examples of the phenomenon being studied as they are pre-reflected; that is, as they are lived through rather than theorized about.

The subject matter of the phenomenological researcher is the world as experienced by the individual. The aim is a deeper understanding of the life-world; the world as experienced by the individual. Giorgi indicates that the life-world is "the every-day world as it is lived by all of us prior to explanations and theoretical interpretations of any kind" (Giorgi, 1975 p.99). Life-world includes emotions, motivations, symbols and their meaning, empathy and other subjective aspects associated with the naturally evolving lives of individuals (Berg, 1989). The life-world is essentially all of a person's physical and affective experiences and the meaning derived from those experiences.

The task of phenomenological research is to study people's experiences as they occur in the everyday world. In accomplishing this, phenomenological research adopts a critical, descriptive approach as opposed to the explanatory and primarily quantitative approach of experimental psychology (Seamon, 1982). The phenomenologist looks closely at the subjective reality as it is lived. "All my knowledge of the world, even my subjective knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless" (Merleau-Ponty, 1986, p.8).

Natural science and phenomenology have different scopes in their searching. The natural scientist looks for general principles, natural laws that are generalizable. Thus, the more examples that can be produced of the phenomenon under study, the higher the probability of confirming or disconfirming a priori hypotheses of causal relations. The phenomenologist searches for deep structure of essential characteristics of particular experiences. In phenomenology the assumption is that each experience is individual and will not be factually replicable, but may be meaningfully replicable. Because people bring their own subjective reality to each experiential context, people who share a common situation will have a different experience of it. Nonetheless there are certain underlying essential meanings that exist in experience and it is this underlying deep structure of intersubjective reality that phenomenologists search for.

Discussion of the Phenomenological Method

In selecting a research methodology, of foremost consideration is it's potential capacity to illuminate the phenomenon of interest. There are many questions that cannot be answered using a natural science methodology. In the past, whole aspects of human functioning were closed to researchers, restricted by the rigor of a natural science paradigm. It was this realization that lead to the creation of alternative research approaches. Though formulated to answer a different kind of question, the phenomenological methodology has been criticized for it's failure to meet traditional natural science research criteria.

The phenomenological approach to research, unlike the natural science method, does not have a specific set of techniques to follow. Phenomenology aims to come to a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experience. With this as the purpose, the research design depends on the particular experience being studied. This avoids the pitfall of forcing the data to fit the method and opens up otherwise inaccessible areas for inquiry. Thus, phenomenologists devise a methodology that best illuminates a particular phenomenon.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to critically evaluate whether the methodology under consideration is the most appropriate in answering the particular question being asked. From a natural science perspective, evaluation typically involves consideration of such criteria as validity, reliability and generalizability. In evaluating the phenomenological method using these criteria, it is important to keep in mind that this method is based upon different metatheoretical assumptions than those underlying natural science methodology (Wertz, 1986). In the following section I will discuss the phenomenological methodology with specific consideration to participant selection, an interview approach, data analysis and reliability, validity and generalizability.

Selection of Participants in Phenomenological Research:

Quantitative research requires that participants in a study be selected according to the logic of sampling theory in order to ensure that data can be generalized to a population. Interview participants for phenomenological studies, however, are not selected on the basis of criteria that will aid in statistical generalizability (Polkinghorne, 1981). The criteria for selection of participants is an important consideration for the phenomenological researcher. Generally, participants are selected for their ability to access and report the particular phenomenon under investigation. According to Becker (1986) a basic qualification for interview subjects is that they have salient experiences of the phenomenon in their everyday worlds. Preferred subjects would be centrally involved with the phenomenon and possess a willingness and capability to verbalize descriptions of their experiences. Becker (1986) asserts that participants who are homogeneous in characteristics such as age, sex or educational level, provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon of interest. It is also believed that differences among participants may achieve the same end as meaning lies deeper than extraneous characteristics (Wertz, 1986). Either way, it is the participants intimate involvement with the phenomenon in question that is the important criteria. These participants are often referred to as co-researchers because of the dialogal nature of the data gathering process. Together, the participant and the researcher explore the question to illuminate the phenomenon.

Phenomenological Interview Approach:

While a variety of data sources are available for phenomenological illumination (personal experience, etymological sources, idiomatic phrases, experiential descriptions from subjects, experiential description in literature are examples cited by Van Manen, 1984) one of the most frequently used methods of data collection is the interview.

Because the researcher is attempting to approach the interview in as unbiased a way as possible, there is no set list of questions which must be implemented in a standardized, sequential manner. Lists of questions can imply outcomes. The danger of leading questions is probably less pronounced in a qualitative interview than in questionnaires, where there are few ways of examining how the respondent has understood a question (kvale, 1986). While interviewers should have some broad questions in mind, sensitivity and openness in interviews can reveal views worth exploring of which the interviewer may not have originally conceived. The interview is focussed to lead the interviewee toward certain themes in his life-world (Kvale,1986). The use of open-ended questions offers greater freedom for the respondent to answer on their own terms thus further reduces the possibility of researcher bias.

The interview process can be delineated into stages. Becker (1986) summarizes several interview approaches, identifying three stages as important. In the first stage, rapport is developed between the researcher and the potential participant. The researcher describes the interview approach, the phenomenon to be investigated and begins to elicit personal experience descriptions of the phenomenon from the interviewees. Through this initial process, the researcher assesses whether or not the interviewee has had a salient experience with the phenomenon as well as his or her ability and willingness to communicate this experience.

The researcher then does a preliminary analysis of the descriptions elicited at the first interview. During a second interview, the participant is asked to expand on original descriptions. Interviewing proceeds until both the researcher and participant feel that the experience under investigation has been fully explored. This stage may involve more than one interview.

The third stage involves the corroboration or validation of the provisional synthesis of the data. At this point, the final analysis is presented to the participant for confirmation, elaboration and correction. The researcher is ethically responsible to ensure that the participant leaves the interview feeling comfortable with any new understanding that may have arisen during this process.

Data Analysis:

Having recorded a variety of examples of the experience, the phenomenologist searches for recurring themes that point to the essential structure of the experience. The researcher's orientation is one of interpretation rather than content analysis. Osborne (1990) states, "the interpretive process depends upon the researcher's sensitivity and perceptiveness in relating the data" (p.85). The final written description culminates in a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and provides enlightenment for researchers to see further research possibilities. It is important to note that the results provide one perspective of the investigated phenomenon. As Osborne (1990) indicates: "We must remember that there is no absolute interpretation of the data and that interpretations can produce contradictory or coherent meanings. Ambiguity is intrinsic to meaning. Such ambiguity is more a function of our relationship with our world(s) than the method. (p.90).

It is crucial, in interpretation that the researcher takes extreme care to ensure valid and reliable interpretation of the data.

Reliability, Validity and Generalizability:

Traditional quantitative methodology views reliability in terms of consistency, dependability, replicability and precision of measurement. The concern is with achievement of reliability as it relates to facts. In contrast, the phenomenological approach to reliability focuses on meaning. That is, reliability is based upon invariant meaning which arises from variations in perspectives and facts. The criterion used for reliability in phenomenological research is "persistence of meaning through factual variations" (Wertz, 1986, p.200). Reliability and validity are intricately woven together. According to Osborne (1990) measurement always involves the measurement of something which has to be conceptualized in order to be measured. This conceptualization inevitably involves concerns related to validity in that the nature of the construct being measured will have an effect on how it is to be measured (Osborne,1990). According to Wertz (1986) reliability in qualitative human science cannot be separated from validity since it has no other intention than to bring what is being studied into focus in it's essential meaning.

The issue of validity is an important one for the researcher engaged in any form of scientific research. From the perspective of experimental psychology, it refers to how well a measure represents what it is intended to, whereas in phenomenological research it involves issues of researcher bias. The crucial issue, then, is whether the researcher's descriptions are an accurate representation of the participants experience (Wertz,1984).

There are four main ways to determine validity of interpretations in phenomenological research. First, the researcher "brackets" or suspends his or her preconceptions, beliefs and biases regarding the phenomenon prior to beginning any data analysis. The goal is to foster a greater openness and receptivity on the part of the researcher, to the experience of the participant. Through self-reflection, which is ongoing throughout the research study, an attempt is made to bring greater objectivity to the investigation. From a phenomenological standpoint, objectivity refers to fidelity to the phenomenon and is "a refusal to tell the phenomenon what it is, but a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself" (Colaizzi, 1978 p.52). It is unrealistic to espouse a completely presuppositionless description, as interpretation is inevitable. The process of bracketing, however, and of carefully describing the procedures used in data analysis, provides the reader with an opportunity to understand how interpretations of the data were arrived at (Osborne,1990).

Second, the researcher can verify interpretations with participants. This involves consulting with each participant to determine if the interpretation accurately reflects his or her experience of the phenomenon. It is important to note, however, that factors such as coresearcher's defensiveness can result in valid interpretations being rejected (Osborne, 1990). Consequently, this form of validity assessment is not definitive.

Third, the researcher presents coherent and convincing arguments to substantiate his or her particular interpretation (Osborne, 1990). In this juridical process, it is essential that the reader be able to follow through each step of the data analysis and clearly recognize how interpretive data was derived. This method of validation is considered the most crucial.

Finally, the validity of the interpretation can be determined by the extent to which it is consistent with the experience of other individuals who have experienced the phenomenon but who are not part of the study (Shapiro, 1986).

This final point is closely related to generalizability. In phenomenological research the aim is empathic generalizability. If the description of a person's experience resonates with the experience of others, it has empathic generalizability. This means that others can share a sense of a truth that is in some way similar to the truth of their own experience. This is different from natural science research where generalizability is based upon statistical explanatory procedures. In Phenomenological research it is based upon empathic understanding (Osborne, 1990).

Chapter Summary

Knowledge comes in many forms and is acquired in a multitude of ways. The researcher seeks knowledge and is specialized in gathering information that pertains directly to what it is that he or she desires to learn. Knowledge is best acquired by selecting a methodology that is well suited to the question being asked.

Numerous options exist in choosing a methodology. The phenomenological approach is part of a growing tradition of human science. This approach is different from natural science methodologies which have dominated the field of psychological research. Natural science and human science approaches in psychology, though different in orientation, represent complimentary ways of examining what it means to be human. In a quest for knowledge, it is important to recognize that different paths not only can lead to diverse discoveries but can also converge to make unique contributions in service of a unitary goal, that being a more comprehensive and complete body of knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to specify the actual procedures utilized in attempting to come to a deeper understanding of four adolescent sex offenders. My own pre-assumptions will be outlined in a process of bracketing. This will be followed by a general introduction to the participants. A more comprehensive description precedes each participants analysis in chapter four of this study. Finally, a step by step description of the actual procedures used in gathering and analyzing the data will complete this chapter of the study. Rationale for my choice of methodology will precede discussion of actual procedures.

Rationale For Choice of Method

Adolescent sex offenders have been identified as a difficult group to work with and to 'reach' both in terms of accessing information and in facilitating effective treatment. The defensiveness of this population has been identified by professionals whether the mandate is research or treatment (Dominelli, 1991; Ryan, 1991: Marshall & Barbaree (1990). Creative approaches which provide ample opportunity for authentic sharing, become meaningful in countering the resistance which is the nature of the subject matter itself. Methods which fail to provide this opportunity yet attempt to describe socio-cultural and other factors may be deluded in the assumption that data represents an authentic account of the offender's experience. The personal interview, aimed at understanding the experience of the offender, has authenticity as a method in that it is an attempt to reach deeper levels of meaning, those often unapparent or misrepresented at first glance. My view is that the 'protected' and denied material is more apt to emerge when the offender is given an opportunity to speak of his experience in a manner he chooses as comfortable and where trust has developed between the researcher and the participant. This is not to say that well established misrepresentations or long term silences will be transformed into a revealing communication. Rather, the suggestion is that this method of research creates the opportunity for communication, thus has the potential to acquire authentic understanding of experience.

The skilled interviewer will understand resistance and denial and develop techniques as needed during the data gathering process, that both safeguard the participant's need for defensiveness in protecting what is psychically unmanageable, and in encouraging the revealing of that which is emotionally 'safe' for the participant.

That which is hidden verbally, may be observable in manner, gesture and other behaviors, thus the interview also provides the opportunity for the researcher to observe that which may be deeper than words alone. With these clues, encouragement on the part of the researcher may result in an authentic telling. Contradictions between what is spoken and what is apparent through observable behavior become a rich and otherwise inaccessible source of information.

One additional factor was important in my choice of a phenomenological approach. The adolescent is at the threshold of adulthood with childhood experience only moments from the present. It becomes important to consider what has been experienced in a childhood, from the viewpoint of the one who has experienced it. Though a developmental perspective is beyond the scope of this research project, it is worthy of note that developmental issues become important in the treatment of youth (Steel & Ryan, 1991). With help, children may be able to retrace developmental stages, experience new relationships and become affectively and socially more competent in order to reframe their worldview, restructure their thinking and experience success (Ryan, 1991). In order to reframe a worldview, it is necessary to understand what it is. The phenomenological approach is directly concerned with the life-world of the participant. Understanding the lived experience is the goal. The methodology has been developed to meet this end.

A methodology has been carefully selected that I believe is best suited to the nature of this inquiry. A description of the actual procedures will now be presented.

Participants

The participants involved in this study are four adolescent males who have committed a criminal offense that is considered to be sexual in nature. For the purpose of this study, they call themselves Joe, Gary , Chris and Gizmo. Three out of four of the youths were prosecuted and convicted of one or more sexual offenses. They were placed under the supervision of a probation officer following short periods of time in a youth detention center. A fourth, Joe, who is a sibling incest offender, became a temporary ward of the government and was placed under supervision in a diagnostic and assessment center. Three of the youths were 16 years of age at the time of the interviews. One was 15 years old. Gary was 14 years of age and Gizmo was 13 years of age at the time the offenses were committed. Chris was 15 years old. Joe was 13 years old when incest was reported. The four participants were selected from two therapy groups operating at a clinic that offers psychological services to troubled youth. All four individuals were in mandated treatment at the time of the research interviews.

In selection of participants for this research project, I followed the criteria recommended by Becker (1986). Preferred subjects are centrally involved with the phenomenon, according to Becker, thus sex offenders who are also adolescents were chosen. A second criteria of selection was that individuals should be willing and able to illuminate the phenomenon under investigation. Willingness involved not only agreement on the part of the youths themselves but also parental approval as participants are minors. All of the individuals who were invited to participate, were willing to be involved. In one instance parents declined permission, thus, an alternative youth was selected. Being able to communicate in an in depth manner was a more problematic consideration in selection. The nature of the phenomenological inquiry requires an openness on the part of the participants to share their experiences with the researcher (Polkinhorne, 1979). Two counselling professionals involved with the individuals, assisted in selection based on demonstrated willingness to be open during therapy.

The recommended individuals were interviewed by myself in an initial meeting to further assess willingness and ability to communicate in the context of the research interviews. Degree of defensiveness was a consideration in the participants' ability to provide honest accounts. Of the four males who were initially interviewed, one was not involved in subsequent data collection. Though he was willing to be involved, he did not appear able to communicate his thought or feelings and he related in a superficial manner. Another youth was chosen in his place.

In selection of the participants, consideration was given to the homogeneity of the group as well as the heterogeneity. Becker (1986) indicates that making the sample of subjects as homogeneous as possible helps to articulate the essential structure of phenomenons. He cites other researchers' findings that contrasting groups of diverse single subjects are helpful in arriving at essential views of the phenomenon. The group of four adolescents is homogeneous in that they are all male, adolescent sex offenders who are in therapy, however I was interested in selecting individuals who had been involved in a variety of sexual offenses. One individual (Gary) was convicted of two counts of sexual assault of two similar age females (age 13 and 14 years) and a non-sexual assault of a female child (age 8 years). A second participant (Gizmo) was involved in one count of sexual assault (with a weapon) of an 8 year old male and one count of sexual interference with a female minor (age 13 years). A third participant was convicted of two counts of sexual exploitation and sexual assault of two male children (age 3 and 5 years). A fourth participant was involved in an incestuous relationship with four of his six siblings, two females (age 4 and 12 years) and two males (age 7 and 10 years). Thus a variety of offensive behaviors had been demonstrated by the four participants. It was my intention to vary the facts in this regard in order to achieve a stability of meaning in their experiences that transcends factual variation. "Phenomenological research focuses upon meaning rather than facts. Stable meaning can transcend variable facts" (Osborne, 1990, P. 87).

Bracketing

The process of identifying presuppositions represents a clarification of opinions, biases and hunches which could lead to subjective contamination of data. Bringing my presuppositions to a conscious level, by naming them, has better prepared me to allow the data to "speak for themselves."

My interest in delinquent youth has developed in past employment as a probation officer and in my present work with adolescent sex offenders. Their life experiences have stood in glaring contrast to my own. For many the idea that home is a place of unconditional love and personal validation has been the elusive property of their longing rather than a component of their reality. I have noted that common themes of a childhood marked with emotional pain has dominated the accounts of many of the offenders.

My presuppositions include a belief that, though many risk factors converge within the juvenile's early childhood experience, the quality of parental care is most significant in enhancing the empathy and inhibitions that prevent exploitive behavior. It is also my view, that ongoing non-nurturance in childhood leads to problematic behaviors.

In bracketing, I have identified in myself an ambivalent emotional set, an emotional tug-of-war, as exposure to sex offenders elicits both abhorrence in their disregard for others and sympathy for troubled youth who I see as essentially good.

Personally, I have neither a history of abuse or sexual trauma. Concern as a parent, citizen and student of counselling psychology sustains my interest in the adolescent sex offender.

Procedure

The principal methodological step in phenomenology is gathering descriptions of first person experiences. In phenomenological research, natural language is primary in gaining access to the life-world of the experiencing participant. In this study, data were collected through a process of interviewing the participant, the intent being to develop an understanding of his described experience.

Several preparatory steps were taken prior to data collection. Firstly, the participants' parent(s) were personally contacted to obtain consent and to ensure an understanding of the process. Secondly, an orientation and rapport-building meeting was held with each participant to determine willingness, to answer any questions and to emphasize the voluntary nature of the involvement. Individuals were told that despite parental approval, it was their decision whether or not to be involved. They were also told that if they chose to decline this would in no way affect their therapy or subsequent assessments that may be requested in the future. A clear distinction was thus made between therapy sessions and research interviews. The establishment of rapport was the primary consideration. Thirdly, historical information, available in case files, was reviewed subsequent to selection. This information was not utilized as research data nor did it affect the choice of participants but rather provided the necessary background to guide and encourage the participant to speak of his experience. Information on file included parental accounts, criminal histories, psychological assessments and other related information.

Data was gathered in two descriptive interviews with the participant. The nature of the participant, both as a child and an offender, involved special considerations and modifications in interviewing. These involved the use of age and circumstance appropriate language and the ongoing use of rapport building conversation. In addition, due to the emotion-laden content and the emotional vulnerability of the youth, care was taken to both debrief and diffuse potentially unmanageable material. This involved both support and reinforcing comment during interviews and therapeutic follow-up by the attending psychologist subsequent to interviews. In addition "pop" and cookies and lighter conversations were interjected at appropriate intervals to 'rest' the participant and protect against emotional overload. Dispelling distrust was an ongoing issue and involved sharing some of my own personal background with participants (for example, "when I was your age I remember...").The openness and flexibility of the phenomenological approach allows the phenomenon to be explored in more depth and breadth and is therefore more likely to yield aspects of the phenomenon which might otherwise be missed (Polkinghorne, 1981; Osborne, 1990).

To avoid participants trying to say and do the 'right thing' they were asked not to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear but rather what it was like for them. To assess any comment which may have been influenced by therapy, they were asked to provide examples from their experience and to elaborate. As Wertz (1986) states, the researcher does not want explanation or theories about the phenomenon but examples of it as it is originally being lived through.

In data gathering interviews, careful attention was directed not only at the spoken word but to that which lay beneath, sometimes hidden by neutral language or silences. Body gestures, facial expressions and mood changes were noted as were contradictory statements. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim into written form.

An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was utilized to the extent that the adolescent requested direction in relating his story. For example, he was asked what his first memory was, what he remembered in his earliest years, what it is like to live in his family, to describe himself, his parents, good things, bad things, happy times, sad times and to expand on anything that came to mind. The emphasis was on everyday experience. The interview guide included themes of early childhood, family, home, friends, school, self, offenses and any topic of his choosing. Ample time and opportunity was provided to relate and expand on his life experience in a non-threatening, relaxed atmosphere.

A final interview, to assess validity, took place following analysis of the data. The essential themes were reviewed with each participant. To ensure understanding and to discourage a 'yes set' each was asked to put the themes into his own words. He was then invited to alter anything that did not sound "quite right." He was asked if themes sounded like his experience. Participants' comments are noted in the concluding comments in chapter five.of this thesis.

Data Analysis

In phenomenological research the process of data analysis is aimed at uncovering the essential structures of the phenomenon under investigation. The meaning or essence of a phenomenon is not a simple, one dimensional entity but rather is a multi-dimensional structure which consists of many parts, all of which comprise the whole. Phenomenology utilizes a process of thematic analysis which progresses in a hierarchal manner. The themes which emerge represent the essential structures of the experience.

There is no single way in which to conduct a data analysis in phenomenological research. The method used is a combination of phenomenological procedures established by Giorgi (1975) and Colaizzi (1978). As Colaizzi indicates, the procedures should be considered as typical rather than definitive. In addition procedures usually develop with a considerable amount of overlapping among the steps. As such listed procedures and their sequences should be viewed flexibly and freely by each researcher to allow for appropriate modifications that best illuminate the phenomenon being studied (Colaizzi, 1978). Listed below are the steps that were followed in analyzing the verbal descriptions of four male adolescents who have been involved in offenses of a sexual nature.

1. Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed into a written format. My own written notes accompanied each interview. These were intended to describe gestures, expressions, overt behaviors and other observable data that could not be auditorily detected.

2. Each transcript was read in it's entirety several times. Close attention was paid to meaning in context. Many different possibilities of meaning were considered as the whole protocol was being reviewed. This helped in identifying significant comment which might otherwise have been missed. For example, one participant went into great detail in describing physical characteristics of his grandfather's farm. Taken alone, this could have been considered insignificant in terms of meaning. When considered in the context of the protocol as a whole, it was noted that he engaged in this detailed kind of description for each of the homes of his childhood. A theme of 'Lack Of Rootedness/ Need To Anchor Through Concrete Detail' emerged as an essential component of his experience. The importance of context is exemplified in this example.

3. Phrases and sentences were extracted from each transcript which exemplified a significant aspect of the person's experience. Eliminating repetitive themes was felt to be premature at this point, though Colaizzi (1978) suggests this as appropriate. It is my view that discarding potentially significant comment because it appears similar to other comment, presumes a thorough understanding of the statement at this early point in the analysis. In addition, repetition, such as that noted in the example in step two, can assist in clarifying and identifying those themes which are essential to the final synthesis.

4. Two levels of interpretive abstraction were applied to each excerpt. Firstly, interpretive or paraphrased meanings were attached to each of the significant statements. Here the researcher requires certain creative insight in order to accurately interpret the meaning of the participant's description (Colaizzi, 1978). Care was taken to ensure that the paraphrases remained 'faithful' to the original words that were spoken and to those that remained concealed in the larger context of the experience. Secondly, themes were derived from the excerpts and listed. Meaning units, paraphrases and themes for the four participants in this study comprise the content of tables 1, 4, 7 and 10 (see chapter four).

5. The themes were then grouped into more highly abstracted themes (second level abstraction). For example, themes of

'Resentment of Control', 'Helplessness' and 'Powerlessness' were clustered to form the higher order theme of 'Lack of Power and Control'. A description of how each of the higher order themes was derived accompanies themes in tables 2, 5, 8 and 11 (see chapter four).

6. The second order themes were clustered once again to form the essential themes of each individual's experience (third level of abstraction). For example, the theme of 'disempowerment' emerged as an essential structure and was derived from the above indicated themes of 'Lack of Power and Control' and two other second order themes, 'Taking Power and Control' and Experience of Physical Abuse'. These essential themes were listed and a definition of each was provided in tables 3, 6, 9 and 12.

7. The within person analysis was then synthesized in a narrative form for each of the four participants. This represents the essential experience of each youth interviewed.

8. The essential themes were then discussed with each of the participants in order to validate the analysis. Comments are noted in chapter five of this study.

9. The final step in the data analysis involved the generation of the fourth order clustered themes (table 13; chapter four). These are a higher abstraction of the within person themes and represent themes shared by the four participants. This 'between person analysis' culminated in a composite picture of an adolescent sex offender's experience. As in the other levels of abstraction, care was taken to clarify how each essential theme was derived.

In conclusion, the process of data analysis in this research project can be thought of as a hierarchal procedure aimed at systematically extracting the essential structure of an adolescent sex offender's lived experience. This method respects the uniqueness of each individual's experience and also identifies an essential experience which is common to all four participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of an adolescent who commits a sexual offense. In this study, 'understanding' is represented by descriptive thematic structures which comprise the results of the investigation. Essential themes of experience are indicated in the following pages.

The organization of this chapter involves an introduction to the participant, three tables (thematic analysis levels one to three) and a narrative of the essential experience for each of the four participants. This is followed by a final table (Table 13) which represents the common themes of experience. The unique contributions of each person's life experiences are indicated in the culmination of a commonality that has an empathic generalizability amongst participants. In a narrative discussion of the common themes, the differences in each person's experience are identified as well as the similarities. The final results represent a 'composite picture' of an adolescent who has committed a sex offense.

Description of Tables

First Level of Abstraction

Tables 1, 4, 7, and 10 refer to Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo respectively. Each unit within the tables is numbered for use in subsequent tables.

Second Level of Abstraction

Tables 2, 5, 8 and 11 refer to Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo respectively. This represents the first clustering of themes taken from tables 1, 4, 7 and 10. The numbers in parentheses in each of these tables, refer to the unit numbers in tables 1, 4, 7 and 10 which combine to form the clustered theme. A description provides a sample of the contributing themes and does not include all units indicated.

Third Level of Abstraction

Tables 3, 6, 9 and 12 refer to Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo respectively. The clustered themes of Tables 2, 5, 8 and 11 are grouped once again to form the essential themes of experience. The numbers in parentheses refer to the derivative themes in these preceding Tables. A definition of each third level theme is provided.

Final Level of Abstraction

Table 13 represents a higher order clustering of common themes. Each theme taken from tables 3, 6, 9 and 12 is named. The numbers in parentheses indicate the tables from which the theme originated.

INTRODUCTION TO JOE

"I'm pretty tall, I've got brown or black hair...umm...that's pretty well it."

Joe is 16 years of age. He is a tall, well proportioned teen. Despite a somewhat shabby, neglected exterior, he is a handsome youth with a quiet, pleasant manner. He is the second oldest in a family of seven children. He has one older sister, two younger sisters and three younger brothers. He currently resides with both his parents and five younger siblings. He has always lived with his family with the exception of a one and a half year period following discovery of incestuous relations in the home. During this time he was placed at an assessment center and then into a foster home. Six months prior to being interviewed for this research, he was allowed to return to his family of origin.

Joe has a past history of academic failure (grade one). He is currently in grade nine. His marks are borderline though intellectual assessments on file indicate average to above average ability. He enjoys writing stories and sketching, particularly daggers and snakes.

He has no prior history of criminal behavior. When he was 13 years old, social services intervened in a family situation which involved incest amongst seven of the seven children. Joe was considered a perpetrator. He was held responsible for sexual acts with younger siblings (males age 7, and 10 and females age 4 and 12 years). Force was used predominantly with his four year old sister. Parents were not implicated in incest however physical abuse was identified. In addition, children were locked in closets by parents for extended periods of time.

During the interviews, Joe was cooperative and friendly. He calmly presented his story. I was left with the impression that above all, Joe was honest. Concern with making a good impression or saying 'the right thing' seemed irrelevant to him. If I could use my own words to describe his manner I would say, "Take it or leave it. This is my story. "

Table 1
First Order Thematic Abstractions of Joe's Experience

	Excerpts From Transcribed Interviews	Paraphrases	Themes
1.	(In repeating grade one) I was with kids that were younger than me and still couldn't handle that, so wasn't happy.	Feels incompetent and unhappy at school, failing to measure up to younger classmates.	Sense of incompetence Unhappiness
2.	School just wasn't working for me...even in kindergarten...you know how in kindergarten you're all suppose to play real nice together...like everyday it'd always be the same, coming to school everybody'd lock me out, lock me in till the teacher came.	Disappointed that peer relations did not unfold as they should. Feels rejected and mistreated by others.	Pain of rejection Isolation
3.	I think I kept mostly to myself.	Isolates himself from others.	Isolation
4.	In grade one they'd do the same thing, but they'd be more mean about it, so I just said, "okay fine. You guys do what you want to do and I'll be lonely over by myself."	Feels helpless at peers negative response. Feels lonely.	Apathy Loneliness Pain of Rejection
5.	I had one friend who invited me to his birthday party, but I couldn't go.	Recalls being acknowledged by one friend. Disappointment at not being able to accept the offer of inclusion.	Longing for acceptance
6	I kindof had a different strategy of getting in with everybody 'cause it's another one of those tight-knit circles, and I figured I'd just hang around with them (peers). Like if they went somewhere I'd follow behind, and finally I moved my way into the group and I was accepted. I'd slowly move up.	Employs specific strategies in an effort to be accepted. Feels like an outsider.	Longing for acceptance Feeling like an outsider.
7.	And then I went and hung out with one group member that they didn't like much so they totally blocked us off...they didn't accept him.	Experiences rejection by peers.	Feeling like an outsider Isolation
8.	He accepted me more than the others so I just stuck with him.	Clings to one person who accepts him.	Longing for acceptance.

9.	I used to have a whole bunch of knives, and then when we were fooling around with them he decided he was going to hold one to my throat, so I said, well , fine...(apathetic response)	Feels betrayed as his friend turns on him.	Sense of betrayal Apathy
10	Uh, I just hung around with myself, type thing.	Feels isolated and lonely.	Loneliness and isolation
11.	It's the same group (now) but I don't know what to expect from them, so it's kind of , if I go, then what...	Lacks trust in peers. Fears others responses to him. Feels safe in isolation.	Safety in isolation Anticipation of negative outcome.
12.	So (now) I just hang out by myself.	Protects self from pain of rejection through isolation.	Withdrawal Isolation
13.	(I) read, play with the computer, listen to music, draw, write. (Satisfying?) Yeah to a certain extent...and then it gets boring.	Solitary activities provide temporary relief. Misses companionship.	Loneliness and isolation Futility of efforts
14.	...staying on the outside of all kinds of crowds.Like even at school I've got friends there, but They're not close friends, type thing.	Feels like an outsider. Lacks close relationships.	Feeling like an outsider Lack of emotional intimacy
15.	...it's kind of like I want to get close to them but I don't want to get close to them, so it fits it right there.	Fears yet desires emotional closeness	Fear of rejection Longing for emotional intimacy
16.	Like if you get too close to somebody, you never know if they're going to reject you...so if you don't get too close to them, well, you don't have to worry about it.	Protects self from anticipated rejection by avoiding intimacy.	Avoidance of emotional intimacy Isolation
17	...so I guess this is probably the way I like it. (protection?) yeah, it works.	Rationalizes avoidance of intimacy. Denies pain of loneliness.	Rationalization Denial
18.	There was one friend, a real close friend. He used to get real good marks. I used to get low marks and finally he said, we'll see you...take care...'cause he was trying real hard and I wasn't doing my homework.	Perceives self as a failure. Acceptance is contingent on performance.	Self-worth contingent on performance Pain of rejection
19.	I had too many other things to worry about.	Feels overburdened with worries and pressures in childhood.	Chronic anxiety

20.	(feelings about end of friendship?) I didn't really notice...I noticed sort of but I didn't notice much 'cause that was the least of my worries at that time.	Denies pain of rejection. Sense of being overcome with anxiety related to family matters.	Chronic anxiety Denial Pain of rejection
21.	Mom and dad were never home...so I'd be stuck making dinner or babysitting the kids. Kind of dumped on....before that (before old enough to do it).	Resents parental absence and being put in parental role. Feels like a scapegoat. Sense of being robbed of childhood.	Feeling robbed of childhood Resentment at parental neglect Role-reversal
22.	It finally got to the point where the minute I'd get home I'd take off so Natalie (older sister) would get stuck with babysitting or we'd fight for it.	Attempts to escape chaotic family situation by fleeing or overpowering his sister.	Attempting to escape chaos Overpowering others
23.	(Managed five younger siblings?) Pretty well didn't. It's kind of like they did their own thing. Maureen hadn't started kindergarten yet so the twins were still in grade one and Tom was in grade two.	Feels frustrated in unsuccessful attempts to manage responsibilities.	Helplessness Sense of being a failure or futility of efforts?
24.	School was more like a blur, kind of. I sit there and I vegetate, actually my release, type thing. I go there away from home, you know. Nothing (ar school) that a normal person my age wouldn't have to do. ...homework, tests...	Preoccupation with family responsibility precludes attentiveness at school. Resents age inappropriate responsibilities at home. Seeks escape through school.	Chronic anxiety Resentment of age inappropriate responsibilities Escape through school
25.	It was my escape from home type thing...so I enjoyed going to school when most people hate it. ...chance to get out of the house more.	Views school as opportunity to escape negative family situation.	Escape through school
26.	Oh no, here we go again. 'Cause the kids don't listen to you, so you know that nothing's going to get done.	Feels set-up for failure	Set-up for failure Role reversal
27.	Even to the point of violence, they still won't do anything; they'll wait until you turn your back and they'll take off. I used to get so mad 'cause they wouldn't do their work or whatever, so I'd hit them or cuff them.	Resorts to violence in an attempt to gain control. Expects to failure. Feels angry and frustration.	Feeling set up for failure Taking power and control Anger at siblings Role reversal

28.	...frustrating, kind of like I've got all dumped on me, take care of my brothers and sisters, make dinner and everything. A great big workload that's slowly being piled on top of you.	Feels overwhelmed by responsibility. Sense of being victimized.	Role reversal Feeling set-up for failure
29.	We (parents and self) didn't have a good relationship.	Awareness of poor relationship with parents.	Emotional isolation from parents
30.	I didn't relate well with all the people my age...all my friends were younger than me....I didn't get along with anybody my age.	Perceives self as failure and social mis-fit.	Sense of being a failure Social isolation
31.	I used to stay out until all hours of the night until I had to go home...I'd just wander around and I'd hope by that time everybody was in bed.(usually came home to?)...a bunch of these screaming kids.	Resents siblings as attempts to avoid family responsibility fail.	Attempting to escape chaos Anger
32.	(mom and dad?) We just never got along at the beginning and we still don't.	Sense of hopelessness as relationship with parents shows no improvement over time.	Sense of hopelessness Isolation
33.	(Mom?) ...Her saying that I can't do certain things that I think I should be able to do, things a normal teenager my age should be able to do...like play Dungeons and Dragons...also deals with a girlfriend...	Perceives home environment as abnormally restrictive. Desires autonomy	Longing for autonomy Disempowerment
34.	...then it blends with church...not a real fine line between it (restrictions and church)...they mix...very enforced, like. I don't care for religion, particularly.	Blames family religion on restrictive atmosphere. Generalizes anger	Anger
35.	I don't agree with them (rules of church). They're not flexible, they're there kindof...they don't move.	Disagrees with inflexible rules of church which guide parental values.	Disempowerment
36.	I still have to go to church with them (family) but I sit in the car outside of it...every now and then my toes would freeze...but they warm up.	Rebels against parental restrictions. Suffers hardship rather than comply.	Taking control

37.	Mom and dad don't like her (girlfriend). They're blaming what we do together on her when I should take some of the blame. They're using her as a focal point, you might say, for all their anger...I'm caught in the middle and I want to be with both of them and it's not working.	Feels trapped in a hopeless situation. Desires closeness to both his parents and his girlfriend.	Feeling set up for failure Desiring emotional closeness
38.	(Their anger?) Mom will have a bad day or something like that...like the kids mess up...then you walk in the door and get a full blast of it.	Resents maternal punishment. Views this as non-contingent on his behavior.	Lack of predictability within the home.
39.	It's annoying 'cause she doesn't trust me with my girlfriend alone...all the feelings are based on the church...rules ...mainly church.	Resents that maternal judgements of him are based on external sources.	External determinants of self worth Feeling discounted
40.	(Describe mom.) Umm, angry. She used to hit us with hockey sticks and lock us in a closet ...couldn't handle us or she just got sick of us, I don't know. (lack of emotion in account)	Mother is perceived as angry and cruel. Apathetic account of abuse. Feels unloved.	Apathy Experience of physical and emotional abuse. Feeling unloved by mother
41.	I'd get angry. (cry?) No. I'd be showing a sign of weakness...by crying..Everybody at school says, " oh look he's crying," so keep your feelings locked away.	Locks away feelings of pain.perceiving tears as weak. Feels shamed by peers. Feels angry and violated	Childhood pain is held inside. Anger at violation Shame and embarrassment
42.	Or half the time I'd be rescuing one of the other kids from mom. I'd grab the belt from her before she could hit them all.	Protects siblings from parent.	Need to protect siblings Role Reversal
43.	Like she locked us in the closet for about a day...the next day we broke the lock off so it couldn't be locked.	Unites with siblings for protection.	Bonds with siblings in mutual negative affect. Experience of abuse
44.	(who's in the closet?) First time just me, second time two of us, third time five of us...and this is a real small closet....food (in closet) so we'd have one of the other kids slip us a can opener from the other side.	Unites with siblings for protection.	Bonds with siblings in mutual negative affect.
45.	The last time we were in there for about a day. I think she would have forgot about us if we hadn't kept yelling.	Fears abusive treatment is life-threatening. Unites with siblings to gain freedom.	Fears for his own and his siblings' safety. Bonds with siblings for protection

46.	One reason I got out one time 'cause dad came home and told mom to get me out of that closet.	Perceives father as savior from mother. Feels unable to protect himself.	Fears for his own safety. Divided loyalties within the family Powerlessness
47.	(feelings in closet?)..,boring...that's it. I locked away all my feelings.	Suppresses painful affect.	Childhood pain is suppressed.
48.	After I was sexually abused, I locked all feelings away.	Perceives sexual abuse as the catalyst in suppression of affect.	Suppression of affect. Victim of sexual abuse
49.	It (perpetrator) was a boy we were going to adopt...church member's son...I'd always wanted a big brother...One night he called me over to his bed and he started sucking on my penis.....It was kindof like, Okay, so this is what big brothers do....He did the same thing to my sister.	Recalls sexual violation by person he loved and trusted.	Victim of sexual abuse Sense of betrayal
50.	About a little while after that I started experimenting with my oldest sister...then I got home schooling...mom was really busy and my youngest sister would always be home and we started having sex....pencil in her anus... experimentation ...weird!	Perceives his own victimization and a lack of parental supervision as having precipitated his subsequent sexual experimentation with his sisters.	Perceives sexual victimization as a contributing factor to incest
51.	It stopped and then started up again later...we'd just finished moving so you don't know what to expect from a new town...like you stick around each other for support. We (brothers and sisters) kept close.	Perceives insecurities resulting from change as perpetuating mutual dependency amongst siblings. Connects dependency needs with perpetuation of incest.	Bonding with siblings in fear of the unknown.
52.	Like I know what started it to begin with..'cause I was sexually abused...got to that part of life too quickly, definitely too quick, and then I started experimenting with them.	Regrets premature sexual involvement. Perceives this as contributing to his subsequent incestuous behavior.	Regrets loss of innocence Sexual victimization as contributing to incest
53.	(Mom's emotions?) happiness only once in a while...cried once or twice.	Perceives his mother as lacking in emotional expression.	Emotional deprivation
54.	Dad used to just spoil us rotten....give us some money and tell us not to tell mom.	Idealizes father. Recalls secrets in the home.	Divided family loyalties Longing for closeness with father Idealizing father

55.	He used to spank with a belt and then later, after I started getting more violent with her (mom) he'd hit me and I'd hit him back.	Describes family violence, power struggles and divided loyalties.	Ambivalence toward father Divided loyalties Taking power Family violence
56	Like I used to hit mom and push her around. She used to sit on us...lets get mom off us...or she'd grab you and just twist or push...she'd get physical so I'd get physical right back.	Recalls physical violence against mother as being retaliatory. Unites with siblings in defense.	Need to protect self Unites with siblings against parent Taking control
57.	If I hit mom he'd (dad) hit me...like belts, they'd do nothing for me. They had to hit me twenty-five times before I'd start showing a sign of pain...'cause I was so used to it. (lack of affect in response)	Rebels against physical punishment by failing to show pain. Rationalizes lack of affective response.	Experience of physical abuse Childhood pain is held inside Apathy Attempts to take control
58.	(When mom in a good mood) I steered clear of her all the time no matter what unless one of the kids were getting a belt.	Fears unpredictable responses of mother, avoiding contact. Responsibility to protect siblings overrides self preservation.	Fears for his own safety and the safety of siblings Role reversal
59.	(feelings about mom?) She's still my mother, that's pretty well it, but I don't have respect for her (After therapy) she's changed a bit but I don't see what needs (warrants) respect....whenever she's angry shell take it out on us...It's pretty much the same.(lack of affect in response)	Lacks affective response to mother.Perceives efforts at change as futile.	Apathy Hopelessness
60.	No feeling toward mom? That's pretty well where I'm at. I live there. I sleep there.	Represses affect in relation to mother and to home.	Repression of affect
61.	(Anger toward parents?) I just get rid of it. They get angry then the same thing might happen again so (I) pretty well ignore it. I will go for a walk or something. I hit something... too close...to hitting mom.	Fears his own expressions of anger and those of his parents.Suppresses and displaces anger. Fears loss of control.	Fear of loss of control Suppression and displacement of anger Fear of parental response
62.	I don't know, he's my dad, I love him.	Experiences ambivalence and confusion of affect in relation to father.	Ambivalence in relation to father Confusion of affect
63.	(Dad's feelings?) I Don't know, he's expressed anger, pain.	Is unsure of father's feelings other than anger and pain.	Uncertainty related to father Lack of parental affective response
64.	Uh, I wouldn't know what mom thinks of me.	Lacks affective feedback from mother	Lack of parental affective response

65.	(home?) I kindof live there and that's pretty well it. I stay in my room most of the time, so I don't associate with the family very much.	Lacks sense of belonging as a family member. Isolates himself.	Feeling like an outsider. Isolation
66.	(My room is...) inside the same room with the rest of the four boys, but I've got blankets all around, because it's the bottom bunk, so I stay there most of the time...It's my space, but nobody else comes in.	Longs for a sense of his own space.	Longs for validation as an individual
67.	(after discovery of incest) social welfare took me out of the home.	Experiences imposed isolation from family members.	Isolation
68.	(after return to family) it was different. The family was pretty well back together doing all the things normal families do and stuff.	Perceives his family as abnormal. Idealizes changes upon his return home.	Longing for 'normal family environment.
69.	I used to get real mad, type thing, and then I'm always mad, I'd have sex play with her (4 yr. old sister). I locked her in the closet and I'd bribe her, say I'd give her candy.	Recalls intense feelings of anger associated with sex play. Uses force and bribery.	Anger associated with sex play Use of power in sexual abuse.
70.	...mad about having to be stuck home babysitting the kids...like whenever mom and dad left, I'd go to M., and that's really when I got angry 'cause I'd get stuck babysitting the kids.	Anger regarding domestic responsibilities is directed at sibling. Associates anger with sexual violation of sibling.	Displacement of anger Anger associated incest
71.	...it was like why am I mad...hold on here...it's confusing, kind of like something's taken over your body and you're trying to gain control over it again....the anger...I had no control type thing...then I'd hit my brothers....I'd do things and look around and say "whoa". Like I used to throw brooms through doors.	Feels out of control in relation to anger.Is confused as to source and perplexed at strength.of anger response.	Feeling out of control Displaced anger Confusion related to anger
72.	It (anger) comes. I'd be perfectly normal , and then I'd go to M. and then the anger would come when I least expected it....like if I was watching T.V. all of a sudden I'd start getting mad...whenever she'd (M.) say no, she didn't want to do it, well, then I'd get mad.	Is startled and frightened at unanticipated surge of anger. Non-compliance of victim results in anger.	Feeling out of control Anger Taking power and control

73	(feelings about siblings?) It doesn't really remind me of any feelings...when they were growing up I was always yelling at them to do the dishes or whatever and no feelings of mine involved, type thing, for them.Like, I guess, I don't know, I'd be glad to be their brother, I don't know.	Experiences profound confusion related to his siblings.Feels guilty.	Confusion of affect in relation to siblings Guilt and remorse related to treatment of siblings
74	I can't think of any words to describe it, I just can't, like I missed, when I left home, they were like in grade three and now they're in grade six, so I missed pretty well half of their school years and all that, half of their adolescence.	Exaggerates length of time away from home. Regrets the passing of time and what has been missed.	Regret of childhood lost Feeling like an outsider
75.	Now, I love them like brothers and sisters.	Recognizes inappropriate love response. Longs for normal family relations.	Longing for normal family relations.
76.	(protected them?) 'cause I felt the same hurt. Like when mom was hitting or something like that, I knew exactly how they were feeling....pain...it hurts to get hit with a hockey stick, so I'm kindof their guardian angel ...I didn't want them to go through the same thing.	Identifies with the suffering of his siblings. Sadness at his own suffering. Feels pride as protector.	Sadness in suffering Role reversal Need to protect siblings
77.	Like physical pain. (pain inside?) no, not really.	Denies experience of emotional pain	Denial of emotional pain
78.	I was sorry for what I did. Some nights Id go to sleep crying.	Feels pain and regret related to treatment of siblings.	Pain and regret related to incest
79	(cry often?) No. (nice to know you can still cry?) Not really...it's a pain in the butt....can't remember the last time I cried before that.	Fears emotional expression. Experiences a reluctance to relinquish defenses.	Fear of emotional expression and removal of defenses
80. .	...pain for what has been done to you.	Feels pain of personal violation.	Pain of personal violation
81.	Like I learned to block out my feelings real quick.	Recognizes early suppression of affect.	Childhood pain is hidden.
82.	(cry now?) Yeah unfortunately. I don't like crying. It represents a weakness.	Ambivalence with regard to increased expression of affect.Persists in perception of affective response as weakness.	Rationalization Fear of emotional expression

83.	There are still feelings that I have problems showing...like when I'm happy or when I'm, sad...I don't show my feelings all that much any of the time.	Experiences difficulty expressing his feelings.	Fear of emotional vulnerability Suppression of affect
84.	(happiness?) last time I saw my girlfriend.I get the feeling that I'm actually with somebody that cares about me...happiness and belonging.	Feelings of happiness associated with being loved and cared for are rare.	Feeling unloved
85.	(happiness with dad?) Not as much. Like dad and me are pretty close.	Ambivalence in relation to father. Feels girlfriend cares more than father. (see # 84)	Feeling unloved by father. Ambivalence in relation to father Longing for paternal closeness.
86.	He's seen it (mom's beatings with hockey sticks) once or twice and every time he'd stop her "cause dad would know the belt....He'd know how many spankings to give for whatever you did.....he'd only hit with the belt twice or whatever and then mom, I guess, she'd let her anger get the best of her and then keep going on and on and on.	Expression of father's reasonable nature contradicts earlier statement (see #57). Perceives mother as being out of control.	Ambivalence in relation to father. Lack of predictability in relation to mother Experience of physical abuse
87.	They (parents) are pretty well getting in between it (relationship with girlfriend). Last time we had a phone conversation, they recorded it. I was mad.	Feels anger in relation to parental violation of privacy and lack of support.	Anger at violation Lack of validation
88.	There's nothing to talk about. It's their way or no other way.	Feels disempowered and discounted. Apathy in relation to parental rigidity.	Feeling discounted Feeling disempowered Sense of futility
89.	(attitude) to mom, it's like I don't want to have anything to do with you. (mom and dad?) yeah, its like they're wrecking my life.	Withdraws from parents whom he perceives as harmful. Feels anger towards parents.	Anger at violation Withdrawal.
90.	Like with me and my girlfriend, I kept them totally in the dark, 'cause then they'll go and change something on me. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, if she's coming up for a visit, they'll have a surprise, "we're going away."	Keeps secrets from parents to avoid their sabotaging his plans. Feels his needs are discounted.	Disempowerment Feeling discounted
91.	I keep my opinion to myself, and even if I do express my opinion, nobody listens.	Is frustrated in futility of self-expression, lack of validation.	Lack of validation Feeling discounted

92.	I like playing (Dungeons and Dragons) but my parents won't let me 'cause their opinion is that it's evil. They won't tell me why it's evil.	Resents dogmatic parental approach. Seeks explanation to no avail.	Disempowerment Feeling discounted
93.	(sports?) Not really.. D. and D...Nintendo.(At the Youth Assessment Center) I was forced to interact with all the peers, I didn't mind. Like after a while I enjoyed it. But I needed the push to get me started interacting.	Appreciates attentiveness of staff at the Youth Assessment Center. Desires guidance and direction.	Desires guidance and direction
94.	I interact with students (at school). I haven't got the guts to go see if they're going to beat me up or not (after school).	Withdraws from peers contact fearing response. Belittles self as not courageous.	Isolation of self Devaluation of self Withdrawal
95.	I always used to have a knife...power....I used to fool around with fire also. Just sort of dangerous stuff...used to come home every day , put a knife in the back pocket....when I got home.	Seeks safety and power by carrying weapons. Takes power at home.	Need for protection Taking power
96.	I got in a few fights there (school). Every now and then I'd get pushed around.	Experiences conflict with peers.	Lack of peer acceptance
102.	(As a student academically?) Not good. Before I wasn't even passing, thirty-fives and stuff, real low.	Experiences failure at school.	Experience of failure
98.	(afraid of re-offence?) No 'cause it hurts so many people...hurts your victims, gets you in trouble, hurts me knowing that what I did hurt other people.	Feels pain in having hurt others	Sadness and remorse related to offenses
99.	Home would be a place where you feel wanted type thing, wanted and loved. To tell you the truth, the only place I feel that is at my girlfriend's. I don't feel that at home. At home we pretty well shuffle around each other, my parents and that, and shuffle around everything and only get to everything when we need to, absolutely have to....	Feels unloved and unwanted at home.Describes home as a place of superficial, necessary encounter.	Feeling unloved and unwanted Longing for home Emotional deprivation

100.	My feeling is, like, so much is gone, so much has gone by without me being there. I've been gone so long...two years...one and a half years, something like that	Exaggerates his time away from home regretting what has been lost.(see #78).	Regret of childhood lost
101.	(missed) I don't know, seeing the boys grow up. I feel like I missed all the fun stuff. I just missed what regular families had, type thing...parents that were around all the time to play, and we loved them.	Longs for family and home. Feels pain at loss of childhood.	Pain of childhood lost.
102.	Like why did I come back? I just don't feel like I belong. I feel like they spent so much time without me.	Feels like an outsider upon his return to his family.	Feeling like an outsider
103.	(families feelings about your return?) It doesn't really matter. I just don't have the feeling that I belong there. Like most places I find the it's kindof like you fit in a little hole, then you help or whatever, You're the missing piece or whatever. I find all I am is an extra piece. Like nothing is different except that I am there.	Feels his presence in the home has no value. Feels unwanted and unnecessary	Sense of worthlessness Feeling like an outsider Feeling unwanted
104.	I just wish I had more freedom, more chance, like normal teenagers do. Like I wish that I could tell my parents that I don't want to have anything to do with their restrictions and they'd listen, and then I could make my own decisions.	Longs for validation. Seeks independence.	Longing for autonomy Longing for support and acknowledgement
105	I just wish I had some support from both of them, at least like, making my own decisions...they make my decisions...they have no faith in me.	Longs for validation and trust of parents. Seeks both independence and parental support	Longing for parental support Longing for autonomy Lack of validation
106.	(drawing) a real sick looking dragon. I can't draw as well as other people in my class.(drawing swords and daggers as we talk)	Compares himself unfavorably to others. Criticizes his own efforts.	Devaluation of self
107.	(When we took your knife away) Well I definitely didn't feel powerful.	Feels unprotected and disempowered when his knife was removed.	Lacking sense of power from within

108.	(describe self) I'm pretty tall, I've got brown or black hair, umm that's pretty well it. (what else?) I don't know, I like to write, I like to draw, although I'm not great at it.(strengths?) I don't know. I have a creative imagination, have trouble putting it on paper.I'm good at sports...some sports that's pretty well it.	Superficial description of self. Lacks sense of self worth. Diminishes abilities and strengths.	Devaluation of self Superficial criteria as determinants of self worth
109.	I don't open up to everyone completely except one person. (girlfriend)	Suppresses affective responses.	Suppression of affect Emotional isolation
110.	Before I came here (therapy) I felt like I was shit, pretty much. Like nobody at school liked me. Personal hygiene was the pits, didn't brush my hair, didn't brush my teeth, had a bath when I was forced to. It was pretty gross.	Neglects self describing his appearance as gross. Feels worthless.	Lacking sense of self worth
118.	It was a blur until I went to YAC (Assessment Center) and ,like, hold on, there's some things we've been missing here.But it didn't really seem part of my life. It was kindof , like, okay, fine, we get up, we go to school, we come home. ...combing my hair, brushing my teeth, they just didn't seem relevant. I didn't even think about them.I didn't have any time to worry about it. Like,I had other things to worry about.	Apathetic attitude toward self and futility of life style. Plagued with concerns in relation to family.	Hopelessness/apathy Chronic anxiety Resentment Diminished sense of self worth
112.	...so they (peers) didn't go near me, so that didn't help.	Alienates others by his poor hygiene.	Isolation of self
113.	I had a real nice grade 6 teacher. (she said) "I've heard a whole bunch of things about you but I'm not going to believe them"..I was glad.	Values a teacher who recognizes his worth	Need for validation
114.	(throughout school?) just barely pulling by...like just barely pass.	Ongoing struggle for success at school.	Experience of failure
115.	(future?)...becoming a computer technician...my girlfriend suggested it....sounded pretty smart...I wouldn't have thought of it.	Discredits his own intellectual ability.	Devaluation of self

116	(changes in dad?)...Uh, a little bit. He watches his temper more often. (warm kind of person?)...he is now, before he wasn't.	Confused about father. Notes minor improvements.	Uncertainty related to father
117.	The whole family...pretty well stay away from whatever (hugs) now it's like every night everybody gets a hug, except me: I get a handshake; I don't hug....everybody... I don't (hug)...I just don't want to.	Avoids demonstrations of affection.	Isolation of self
118.	(mom?) mmm (rolling eyes, leaning back, breathing heavily; no direct answer).	Unresolved conflict related to mother. Sense of futility and anger.	Anger at mother Hopelessness related to mother
119.	(family day weekend?)...it was okay I guess. Like I behaved, we did our chores and that on that one day...it was fun...oh well...they found some letters that my girlfriend wrote me...they weren't too pleased about them.	Harmony in the family is contingent upon chores and responsibilities. Apathetic response to event which enters as a spoiler of fun.	External determinants of self worth Apathy
120.	'Cause my opinion is, they've pretty well screwed me around, I I can't do anything about it. Kind of sucks. It's not fair...My parents are being real assholes.	Feels helpless to eliminate victimization by parents. Feels intense anger at parents.	Anger at parents Disempowerment
121.	So I was not a happy camper...pretty well showed that to my parents...Uh, lets see, what all did I break...I got mad and wrecked a whole bunch of stuff...Oh well another wrecked thing; big deal, it's only their stuff.	Seeks revenge and displaces anger. Frustration and sense of futility as patterns are repeated.	Displacement of anger Sense of futility Taking revenge
122	Ann (sister) wanted to know what it was about and mom and dad go, "just a few letters," And that wasn't called for. At that moment I wasn't exactly interested in being polite and sharing things with her.(sister)	Resents parents' lack of consideration.	Feeling discounted
123.	I was mad...Don't let it get you. It just kind of stays there waiting for another moment to come out. Like whenever I get mad or something and it'll decide to go, "we'll, hello, I'm back." It will probably decide it wants to come back one of these days, but oh well!	Personifies anger as powerful and out of control.	Anger Lack of power within apathy/hopelessness

124.	I almost decked her (mom) again, so I decked the fridge. Dad would come into the situation after I hit mom and then he'd hit me and I'd hit him back and so on.	Displaces hostility toward mother. Describes physical violence and divided loyalties within the family.	Intense anger Divided loyalties Taking power Family violence
125.	...mom trying to control him (brother)...uses too much force so you pretty well go down the stairs. (nonchalant attitude)	Experiences helplessness and hopelessness in relation to parental treatment of siblings.	Helplessness Hopelessness
126.	Well, I figure they (parents) are going to screw me around for the rest of my life so what the hell. I'll have plenty of it (anger) whenever they do, whatever they did do again. Cause it's not like them just to say, "okay ho-hum do whatever you feel like doing." They definitely want to screw up my life, so I figure, oh well wait, see what dumb thing they do this time.	Experiences hopelessness in relation to parental treatment. Expectation of recurring abuse by parents.	Hopelessness Anger at parents
127	I figure, oh well! Just I have no choices whatsoever or you can do this or this and I'll end up doing whatever they want; fine follow this and see where this goes to. I pretty well get screwed up in the end. Like, I'm mad 'cause I went along with it, what they wanted, not what I wanted.	Gives up in an experience of total disempowerment. Expects no improvements. Feels anger at self for passive response.	Disempowerment Futility Anger at self
128.	Like I'll compromise, sure I've compromised many a time on this whole issue (girlfriend), but what my parents are asking is outrageous.	Sees his own efforts as futile. Considers Parental expectations to be outrageous.	Futility/hopelessness

Table 2
Second Order Thematic Abstractions of Joe's Experience

	Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (40, 84, 85, 99, 103)	**Feeling unloved and unwanted by parents and siblings.** Feels unloved and unwanted at home; "She used to hit us with hockey sticks and lock us in a closet...sick of us...I just don't know." Feelings that he is cared for are rare, "...wanted and loved...I don't feel that at home." Feels like an extra piece at home, "like nothing is different except that I am there.
2.	Pain of Rejection (2, 4, 9, 18, 20)	**Deep hurt in rejection by others** Feels pain of rejection by peers, "coming to school everybody would lock me out." Feels pain and betrayal as his one friend turns on him, taking a knife to his throat.
3.	Sadness and Depression (1, 41, 76, 78, 80, 81, 98)	**Sadness and depression related to family friends and self.** Feels unhappy at school, "everybody at school says look he's crying so keep your feelings locked away." Identifies with suffering of siblings, "...like when mom was hitting us or something...'cause I felt the same pain." Feels pain in having hurt others, "hurts me knowing that what I did hurt other people...I was sorry for what I did. Some nights I'd go to sleep crying." Feels pain of personal violation, " for what has been done to you."
4.	Diminished Sense of Worth (1, 18, 30, 39. 41. 66, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 94, 97, 103, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113, 114, 115, 122)	**Experience of lack of validation and feeling discounted.** Feels incompetent at school. Feels like a failure losing close friend because he didn't try hard enough. Experiences failing grades at school. Perceives self as a social mis-fit. Resents that maternal lack of trust is founded on external sources..."all feelings are based on the church." Craves validation as an individual, creating his own "space" by surrounding his bottom bunk with blankets in a room shared with three brothers. Resents parental violation of his privacy in recording his telephone conversations. Feels 'unheard' by parents, "even if I do express my opinion, nobody listens." Indicates that parents have no faith in him. Recalls one teacher who recognized his worth, "I was glad." Feels shamed by peers. Belittles self, "I haven't got the guts...I wouldn't have thought of it." Diminishes his abilities and strengths.Feels his presence at home has no value. Neglects self indicating, "I felt like shit, personal hygiene was the pits, didn't brush my hair, had a bath when I was forced to. It was pretty gross."

5.	External Determinants of Self Worth (18, 39, 108, 119)	**Self worth is measured externally.** Loses his close friend because his marks at school were not good enough, "he used to get real good marks. I used to get low marks and finally he said, we'll see you...take care," Resents that maternal judgements of him are base on external sources. Describes self mainly in superficial terms. family harmony contingent upon chores and responsibilities, "it (family day) was okay I guess...like I behaved, we did our chores on that day."
6.	Confusion of Affect (15, 54, 57, 62, 63, 64, 71, 73, 76, 78, 85, 86, 116)	**Confusion related to self and other.** Fears yet desires emotional closeness, "I want to get close...but I don't want to get close." Experiences ambivalence in relation to dad, "I don't know...he's my dad, I love him. Indicates that he and his father are "pretty close" yet feels minimal happiness with dad. Feels "spoiled" yet abused by his father. Perceives father as protector and violator, "he's seen it (mom beating with hockey stick)...and every time he'd stop her...he'd know how many spankings to give. Contradicts himself , indicating both parents would repeatedly beat him, "...belts...they'd have to hit me 25 times," Is confused about his feelings toward his siblings loving them as a brother on one hand and violating them on the next," I guess, I don't know, I'd be glad to be their brother, I don't know. Acts as both protector and violator of siblings. Feels pride as siblings protector, "I'm kind of their guardian angel." Feels guilt in violation of siblings. Is confused about feelings related to peer contact, "It's kind of like I want to get close to them but I don't want to get close to them." Confused about anger response, "like why am I mad, It's confusing...kind of like something's taken over your body."
7.	Divided Family Loyalties (46, 54, 86, 124)	**Family loyalties become divided for protection.** Requires protection from mother. Father acts as protector, "dad came home and told mom to get me out of that closet." Father stops mother from repeated beatings with a hockey stick. Keeps secrets from mother upon request ,..."(he'd) give us some money and tell us not to tell mom." Perceives father as protecting mother, "dad would come into the situation after I hit mom and then I'd hit him."
8.	Role Reversal (21, 26, 27, 28, 42, 58, 76)	**Taking a parental role.**Assumes a position of authority at home, "they (siblings) wouldn't do their work so I'd hit them and cuff them." Placed in a position of caretaker, "nothing gets done at home 'cause you know the children don't listen to you." Assumes domestic responsibilities," I've got all dumped on me, take care of my brothers and sisters, make dinner...." Protects siblings from parent, " I'd grab the belt from her before she could hit them all." Responsibility to protect siblings overrides self preservation.

9.	Bonding With Siblings For Protection (43, 44, 45, 51, 56)	**Siblings unite for protection.** Cooperates with siblings to protect against abuse, "she locked us in the closet for about a day...the next day we broke the lock of so it couldn't be locked." Siblings on the outside of the closet assist those on the inside.Unites with siblings in defense against mother, "she used to sit on us...lets get mom off us." Keeps close to siblings after relocation to a new town, "like you stick around each other for support. Perceives dependency needs as perpetuating incestuous behavior.
10.	Loneliness and Isolation (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 29, 30, 32, 53, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 74, 94, 96, 99, 102, 103, 109, 112, 117)	**Experience of emotional and physical isolation.**Longs for acceptance by peers, recalling one invitation to a birthday party. Employs specific strategies in an effort to be accepted, " I'd follow behind and finally I moved my way into the group," Clings to one friend who accepts him. Feels like an outsider, "staying on the outside of all kinds of crowds." fights with peers and is "pushed around". Isolates himself from peers, fearing rejection. neglects his appearance ," so they didn't go near me." Feels that peers would lock him out. Experiences loneliness, " I'll be lonely over by myself." Feels like an outsider in his own family when he is removed from the home due to incestuous behavior, " like, why did I come back, I just don't feel like I belong...all I am is an extra piece.Feels emotionally isolated from his parents describing home as a place of superficial necessary encounter. Isolates himself from his parents, staying in his room, "I don't want to have any thing to do with you. Experiences emotional deprivation in a lack of expression of affect at home, not knowing what his parents are feeling. Fears emotional intimacy, "It's kind of like I want to get close to them but I don't want to get close to them." Dislikes crying and experiences difficulty showing his emotions.
11.	Disempowerment (33, 35, 40, 43, 46,55, 57, 61, 71, 72, 80, 86, 88, 90, 92, 105, 107, 120, 123, 125, 127)	**A feeling of helplessness in an environment that takes away power.** A lack of power within.Perceives home environment as abnormally restrictive. Disagrees with inflexible parental values.Experiences helplessness as a victim of physical abuse Feels powerless to help himself, needing fathers help in letting him out of the closet. Feels restricted by parents, "it's there way or no way." Feels parents sabotage his plans, suddenly making changes. Is told no without explanation. Lacks autonomy, "they make my decisions." Feels disempowered when his knife is taken away. Feels a lack of power within, fearing loss of control of anger...Kind of like's somebody's take over your body and you're trying to gain control over it. Personifies anger as powerful and out of control, "well hello, I'm back."

12.	Apathy/Hopelessness (4, 9, 23, 26, 27, 32, 37, 40, 57, 59, 88, 111, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128)	**Experience that efforts are futile. Feeling set up for failure.** Feels a sense of futility in repeated peer rejection, "okay, fine, you guys do what you want and I'll be lonely over by myself." Feels disappointment at betrayal of friend, " so I said...well fine." feels hopeless as relationship with parents shows no improvement. Feels set up for failure , " oh no, here we go again. Feels buried in domestic responsibilities, " a great big workload that is slowly being piled on top of you. " Lacks emotion in accounts of emotional and physical abuse. Sees no point in talking to his parents. Describes an apathetic attitude in relation to self, " It was kind of like, okay, fine, we get up, we go to school, we come home. combing my hair...didn't seem relevant. Feels a sense of futility as destructive patterns at home are repeated, "uh...lets see...what all did I break this time. Oh well, another wrecked thing...big deal. Feels unable to change his own anger response. Experiences hopelessness in relation to parental treatment of siblings. Expects recurring abusive treatment in relation to himself, "well I figure they are going to screw me around for the rest of my life so what the hell...wait and see what dumb thing they're going to do next."
13.	Taking Power and Control (22, 27, 36, 56, 57, 69, 72, 95, 121, 124)	**Taking back some power.** Attempts to escape family responsibilities by overpowering his sister, "we'd fight for it." Uses violence in an attempt to control siblings, I'd hit them or cuff them." Rebels against parental restrictions refusing to cooperate. Uses physical force in retaliation against parental control, " she'd get physical so I'd get physical right back." Refuses to show pain during beatings. Uses power in relation to sexual offense, "I'd get mad...lock her in the closet, bribe her." Seeks power by carrying a knife...takes power at home, "I always used to have a knife...power...used to come home everyday, put a knife in the back pocket. Breaks parental belongings, taking revenge. Assaults mother. Assaults father.

14.	Anger and Resentment (21, 24, 27, 31, 34, 41, 61, 69, 70, 71, 72, 87, 89, 118, 120, 121, 123, 124, 126, 127)	**Anger at being violated.** Resents being put put in a parental role, being "dumped on" by parents. Anger turns to violence in an attempt to gain control, " I used to get so mad, so I'd hit them (siblings)) or cuff them. Displaces anger at parental restrictiveness, blaming the church Suppresses and displaces intense anger toward mother, fearing parental repercussion, "pretty well ignore it... go for a walk...hit something...too close to hitting mom." Associates anger with offense, "I used to get real mad, type thing, and then I'm always mad; I'd have sex play with her.anger is personified as powerful and out of control..." something's taken over your body and you're trying to gain control over it again... the anger ...I'd hit my brothers...I'd do things and look around and say, whoa. Like I used to throw brooms through doors. Feels angry when victim say "no". Feels mad at parental violation of privacy, " I was mad...don't let it get to you. It just kind of stays there waiting for another moment to come out. " Refers to parents as "assholes." Destroys parents' personal property. Feels angry at self for complying with parental wishes. Expects anger at parents to persist, " what my parents is asking is outrageous."
15.	Need to Protect; to be Protected (38, 42, 45, 46, 49, 55, 56, 58, 61, 76, 86, 95, 124)	**Feeling that home is not safe.** Rescues siblings from parent. Fears for his own safety and his siblings' safety, " I think she would have forgot about us (in closet). Perceives father as his savior, " one reason I got out (of closet) one time 'cause dad came home." Feels a need for paternal protection, "he'd stop her...her anger would get the best of her. "Experiences ongoing physical violence amongst family members. Defends himself against physical abuse, " she'd get physical so I'd get physical right back. Fears unpredictable responses of mother, " I steered clear of her all the time no matter what unless one of the kids were getting a belt." Risks his own safety to protect siblings. Carries a knife at home. Is sexually abused at home by a brother-figure.

16.	Protecting the Emotional Self (11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 22, 24, 25, 31, 34, 41, 47, 48, 57, 60, 61, 70, 71, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 89. 109, 121)	**Ongoing use of defense strategies to protect the emotional self.** Withdraws from peer contact, fearing rejection, " so it's kind of if I go then what." Rationalizes avoidance of emotional intimacy and denies pain of loneliness, "...so I guess this is probably the way I like it. " Escapes chaos at home, "Id take off...used to stay out until all hours of the night until I had to go home." School becomes escape from home, "...chance to get out of the house more. Hides childhood pain ,"...so keep you feelings locked away." Suppresses and rationalizes affect, " they had to hit me 25 times before I'd start to show a sign of pain...'cause I was so used to it." Denies experience of pain, "...belts...they do nothing for me." Represses affect in relation to mother and home life. Fears emotional vulnerability and removal of defenses, "...(crying)...it's a pain in the butt."recognizes early suppression of affect, "...learned to block out my feelings real quick." Protects from emotional vulnerability, " there are still feelings that I have problems showing...like when I'm happy or when I'm sad " Suppresses and displaces anger response, "I pretty well ignore it....go for a walk...hit something." displaces anger regarding domestic responsibilities onto siblings. Associates anger with sexual offense, ..."mad about having to be stuck home babysitting...I'd go to M. (younger sister).Displaces anger onto self when he complies with parents wishes, "what they wanted not what I wanted."
17.	Chronic Anxiety Related to Family Responsibility (19, 20, 21, 24, 111)	**Experience of 'worry' about family matters.** Worries consume his time and preclude effective functioning at school, "losing a friendship, "was the least of my worries at the time." Describes worries related to excessive responsibility at home. Feels plagued with concerns to the extent that he neglect his own appearance, " I had other things to worry about."
18.	Regret of Childhood Lost (21, 24, 52, 74, 100, 101)	**Sense of being robbed of childhood.** Feels his responsibilities at home were not age appropriate. Regrets time that has been lost following his removal from the home, " so much is gone, so much has gone by without me being there."Feels pain at lost childhood opportunity, " I just missed what regular families had...parents that were around all the time to play and we loved them. Feels robbed of innocence in premature sexual involvement, " got to that part of life too quickly, definitely too quick.

19.	Yearning For What Could Be (6, 8, 15, 33, 37, 54, 68, 75, 85, 93, 99 104, 105)	**Craving what has been missed**. Craves emotional intimacy with peers and parents. Longs for emotional intimacy with peers and parents. Longs for acceptance. Longs for autonomy, "things a normal teenager my age should be able to do... I just wish I had more freedom, more chance. "Yearns for normal family environment, "doing all the things normal families do and stuff." wishes for parental support and acknowledgement, "...I wish that I could tell my parents...and they'd listen. Desires guidance and direction appreciating efforts of staff at the assessment center, "I needed the push..." Longs for a home...a place where you feel wanted and loved. I don't feel that at home.
20.	Victim of Physical Abuse (40, 43, 55, 57, 80, 86)	**Victimization by parents**. Experience of being victimized by mother, "she used to hit us with hockey sticks and lock us in a closet...for about a day." Experiences physical punishment by father, "He used to hit us with the belt...he'd hit me and I'd hit him back." Is victimized by both parents, "like belts...they had to hit me 25 times before I'd start showing a sign of pain...'cause I was so used to it." Feels pain of violation..."pain for what has been done to you."
21.	Victim of Sexual Abuse (48, 49, 50, 52)	**Victimization by brother-figure**. Suppresses affect following being sexually abused, "after I was sexually abused, I locked all feelings away." Feels betrayed by big brother figure that family intended to adopt.; "one day he called me over to his bed and he started sucking on my penis...it was kind of like, okay , is this what big brothers do." Perceives his own victimization and lack of parental supervision as having precipitated subsequent experimentation with his sisters.

Table 3

Third Order Thematic Abstractions of Joe's Experience

	Essential Experience	Definition
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (1, 2)	The feeling of being unloved by mother and father. Experience of being rejected by peers.
2.	Sadness and Depression (2, 3)	Profound sadness in his own experience of emotional and physical suffering. Sadness in the pain of siblings. Experience of being shunned by peers.
3.	Diminished Sense of Self Worth (4, 5)	Feeling inferior and unworthy. Experience of being devalued and discounted by others. No value within as external criteria become measures of self worth.
4.	Confusion of Affect (6)	Ambivalent feelings related to family members. Experience of wanting emotional closeness yet withdrawing from it. Confusion related to how others feel about him. Failure to comprehend his own feelings as both violator and protector.
5.	Loneliness and Isolation (10)	Feeling like an outsider. Experience of self imposed isolation and being isolated by others. Encompasses physical and emotional isolation.
6.	Disempowerment (11, 13, 20)	Experience of being deprived of power and control. Sense of helplessness as others take control. Experience of helplessness as a victim of physical abuse. Feeling a lack of power within, fearing ability to control his own behavior and emotions (particularly anger). Taking back power through rebellious behavior, vengeful actions, physical force and weapons.
7.	Sense of Futility (12)	Experience that efforts are futile. A sense of helplessness and hopelessness as patterns repeat themselves. Lack of affective response in the midst of emotion laden situations. Apathetic responding during interview.
8.	Anger and Resentment (14)	Experience of intense anger at parents; feeling used and abused. Displacement of anger on to siblings and innate objects in destructive and assaultive behaviors. Experience of anger as being powerful and out of control. Anger at self.

9.	Protecting the Physical Self (7, 9, 15)	Bonding with siblings in mutual negative affect. Uniting for protection against parents. Divided loyalties within the family in the formation of alliances for protection. Home as unsafe; unpredictability, anger and family violence.
10.	Protecting the Emotional Self (16)	Ongoing use of psychological defense mechanisms and strategies.
11.	Regret of Childhood Lost (8, 17, 18)	Premature assumption of parental responsibilities in a reversal of roles. Chronic anxiety related to matters at home and concern for siblings. Sense of being robbed of childhood and innocence.
12.	Yearning for What Could Be (19)	Intense wish for autonomy, emotional intimacy, acceptance, parental support and love. Desire for ideal of family and home. Desire to find what has been missed in life.
13.	Victim of Physical Abuse (20)	Experience of physical abuse by mother and father.
14.	Experience of Sexual Abuse (21)	Experience of sexual violation and betrayal by older brother-figure.

SYNTHESIS OF JOE'S EXPERIENCE

All quotations in the following synthesis refer to excerpts in Table 1.

Feeling Unloved and Unwanted

Joe experiences a strong sense that he is not loved or wanted by his parents, siblings and peers. He perceives his mother's excessive use of punitive measures as the result of her being "sick" of him. Feelings, that he is cared for at home, are rare: "Home is a place where you feel wanted, wanted and loved. I don't feel that at home." He feels unwanted and unneeded by family members upon his return to the family: "I find all I am is an extra piece. Like nothing is different except that I am there." Joe encounters ongoing peer rejection which began in early childhood. He feels deeply pained and perplexed; "You know how in kindergarten you're all suppose to play real nice. Everybody'd lock me out and in grade one they'd do the same thing but they'd be more mean about it." He feels the pain of betrayal as one of his friends puts a knife to his throat and another rejects him because his marks aren't good enough.

Sadness and Depression

Joe's sadness is too deep for tears. Rejection by peers results in sadness and deep hurt for Joe: "Everybody at school says, look he's crying so keep your feelings locked away." He identifies with the pain and suffering of his siblings, "like when mom was hitting us or something, I felt the same pain." He feels sadness and remorse in violating his siblings, "hurts me knowing what I did hurt other people. Some nights I'd go to sleep crying." Joe experiences a pervasive sadness in an experience of personal violation, "pain of what has been done to you."

Diminished Sense of Self Worth

Joe has a sense that he is unworthy and unlovable as he is rejected by peers and mistreated by parents. He feels shamed as he is ridiculed for crying at school. He feels unimportant and 'unheard' by parents: "Even if I do express my opinion, nobody listens." He recalls one teacher with fondness because she refused to believe negative reports about him. An experience of repeated failure academically and socially contributes to an overall sense of worthlessness. He feels he is judged by external criteria such as dictates of the family religion, grades at school and completion of chores at home. Worth is measured externally rather than by individual qualities. Joe belittles himself; "I haven't got the guts. I wouldn't have thought of it." He diminishes his abilities and strengths. In feeling that he is of little value he neglects himself: "I felt like shit, personal hygiene was the pits, didn't brush my hair, had a bath when I was forced to. It was pretty gross."

Confusion of Affect

Joe experiences confusion related to his own feelings and the feelings of others. He fears rejection yet desires closeness: "I want to get close but I don't want to get close." He is unsure of how family members feel about him. An ambivalence toward family members emerges. His father is perceived as both protector and violator rescuing him from his mother but also physically abusing him. He experiences profound confusion in relation to his feelings toward his siblings both loving them as a brother and violating them as a perpetrator: "I guess I don't know, I'd be glad to be their brother, I don't know." Dichotomous actions as protector and violator compound the state of turmoil; "I'm kind of their guardian angel." He experiences guilt and remorse in violation of his siblings. The intensity of his sudden anger responses bewilders him; "Like why am I mad? It's confusing."

Loneliness and Isolation

Joe's experience is one of emotional and physical isolation from others. His longing for acceptance by peers is profound as he employs specific strategies in an effort to be accepted; "I'd follow behind and finally I'd move my way into the group. He feels like an outsider, "staying on the outside of all kinds of crowds." An experience of being "locked out" by peers at school contributes to his loneliness. He is both isolated by others and isolates himself for safety, fearing rejection: "If I go then what?" He neglects his appearance recognizing that others avoid him as a result. Being physically removed from his family of origin as a result of offensive behaviors further reinforces the perception that he does not belong. Upon his return he feels like an outsider: "I just don't feel like I belong. All I am is an extra piece." He feels emotionally isolated from his parents and further isolates himself; "I don't want to have nothing to do with you." In an atmosphere of emotional deprivation, Joe knows little about how his parents feel. He fears emotional intimacy and self expressions that leave him feeling vulnerable and unsafe. Crying is equated to weakness thus pain is rarely visible to others. It is not only sadness that is hidden but happiness as well. For the most part, Joe remains 'alone' though he may be surrounded by others.

Disempowerment

A sense of helplessness overcomes Joe as a victim of physical abuse. He needs others to save him looking to his father to prevent his mother's abusive treatment. He feels disempowered in an environment that he perceives as abnormally restrictive. He feels powerless to influence his parents, considering them to be inflexible: "It's there way or no other way." He experiences a lack of autonomy as his parents make all decisions for him and say "no" without explanation. The youth who carries a knife for protection feels little power within. Anger is personified as more powerful than he is: "well hello, I'm back."

Joe takes back power through rebellious behaviors. For example, he chooses to remain in the family car rather than join his family inside the church. He retaliates during physical abuse by refusing to show pain: "They'd have to hit me twenty-five times before I'd start showing a sign of pain." He physically retaliates through vengeful actions, breaking parental belongings. Joe overpowers others, "hitting and cuffing" his siblings in an attempt to gain control. He uses physical force with his parents; "She'd get physical so I'd get physical right back. Dad would come into the situation after I hit mom and then he'd hit me and I'd hit him back and so on." Joe overpowers his siblings in relation to incestuous behaviors: "I'd get mad, lock her in the closet, bribe her."

Sense of Futility

Hopelessness is experienced by Joe as patterns repeat themselves. He believes that his efforts are futile in bringing about change. Many failed attempts to be accepted by peers results in apathetic responding: "Okay, fine. You guys do what you want and I'll be lonely over by myself." He sees no point in talking to his parents about problems and feels set up for failure in relation to domestic responsibilities: "Oh no. Here we go again, a great big workload that is slowly being piled on top of you." Apathy characterizes his attitude toward himself: "It was kind of like, okay, fine, we get up, we go to school, we come home. Combing my hair didn't seem relevant." As destructive patterns at home are repeated, he loses hope: "Oh, well, another wrecked thing, big deal." He expects abuse to continue within the home feeling helpless to assist his siblings. As for himself, Joe indicates, "Well, I figure they (parents) are going to screw me around for the rest of my life so what the hell."

Anger and Resentment

Joe experiences a strong sense of being emotionally and physically violated. His response is one of anger. Though he feels "dumped on" and abused by his parents, he displaces anger on to his siblings, becoming physically violent with them. He attempts to diffuse his anger with his parents by going for walks and hitting innate objects. When his anger is out of control he throws things and intentionally breaks items that belong to his parents. Joe associates anger at his parents with sexual violation of his siblings: "I used to get real mad and then I'm always mad. I'd have sex play with her (sister)." His anger response is perceived as powerful, "something taken over your body and you're trying to gain control of it." For Joe, anger "just kind of stays there waiting for a moment to come out." He resents parental restrictiveness and feels angry that they do not validate him as an individual. He also feels angry at himself for complying to parental demands which he considers "outrageous." Joe expects to feel angry for a long time to come.

Protecting the Physical Self

Joe experiences divided loyalties within his family as alliances are formed for protection. He needs his father to protect him from his mother: "Dad came home and told mom to get me out of that closet." He sees his father as protecting his mother from his own assaults. Joe bonds with his siblings in mutual negative affect, uniting with them against parents for mutual protection. He cooperates with peers, "we broke the lock off so it (closet) couldn't be locked. He cites a further example of mutual support, " She used to sit on us. Let's get mom off us." After relocating to a new town he keeps close to his siblings for support. From Joe's own perspective, incestuous behaviors within the home were perpetuated by dependency needs. Joe fears for his own safety and the safety of his siblings in an experience of ongoing family violence. He fears unpredictable responses of his mother, avoiding contact with her unless he is needed to protect one of his siblings from "the belt." Carrying a knife in his back pocket at home is not sufficient protection for Joe to feel very safe.

Protecting the Emotional Self

Joe employs psychological defense mechanisms and strategies to safeguard his emotional self. He withdraws from peer contact, fearing rejection. He rationalizes his avoidance of emotional intimacy and denies the pain of loneliness: "So I guess this is probably the way I like it." He attempts to escape chaos at home by running away and utilizes school as an escape, "a chance to get out of the house more." Childhood pain is suppressed as he keeps his feelings "locked away." He denies the experience of pain in abuse, stating that he was used to it. He adds, "belts, they do nothing for me." Joe suppresses his anger; "I pretty well ignore it." He displaces anger at his parents on to his siblings and associates sexual offending with being angry at "having to babysit." Though he faces severe repercussions for non-compliance, Joe directs the anger back on to himself when he cooperates with "outrageous" parental wishes. For Joe, it is not very safe to vent his anger at the source.

Regret of Childhood Lost

Premature assumption of parental responsibilities, chronic anxiety related to concern for siblings and a sense of being robbed of innocence, culminate in a feeling of regret over childhood lost. Joe assumes a parental role as disciplinarian and caretaker of his siblings: "I've got all dumped on me." He feels compelled to protect his siblings from parental abuse: "I'd grab the belt from her before she could hit them all." He resents age inappropriate worries, feeling these occupied much of his time to the exclusion of more childlike concerns such as physical appearance and friendships. He feels cheated of childhood: "So much is gone. I just missed what regular families had, parents that were around and we loved them." He feels robbed of innocence in relation to being sexually abused as a child.

Yearning for What Could Be.

A child with regret becomes a child who yearns for what could be. Joe experiences an intense wish for autonomy, emotional intimacy, acceptance, parental support and love. He longs for guidance, appreciating the direction given to him by staff at the assessment center where he was a resident. He longs for home as a "place where you feel wanted and loved."

Victim of Physical Abuse

Joe feels violated and victimized by his parents, describing physically abusive treatment: "She used to hit us with hockey sticks and lock us in a closet for about a day." He describes being beaten with belts by both parents, "twenty five times before I'd start showing a sign of pain. I was so used to it."

Victim of Sexual Abuse

Joe experiences betrayal by an older brother figure who sexually abuses him. He perceives his own victimization as having precipitated subsequent sexual experimentation with his siblings.

Summary

A child experiences physical abuse at the hands of his parents. He is sexually abused by a brother figure. He assumes a role of parent in the home being granted a position of power as caretaker. He protects his siblings from parental abuse, risking his own safety. He feels unloved at home and unwanted by peers as he experiences repeated rejection. He is too worried about family matters to be concerned for himself. He becomes angry and resents the robbery of his childhood. He strikes back sometimes at the source and sometimes at others. Joe is "guardian angel" to his siblings. He is also the one who violates them.

INTRODUCTION TO GARY

"I'm pretty happy whenever I'm trying to forget the past."

Gary is a fifteen year old male attending junior high school. He is a normally bright youth though he has failed a grade and currently experiences low marks in school subjects. He lives with his mother, a single parent, and her two male roommates. He is an only child. His father has been absent from the home since Gary was two years old.

Gary has a humorous nature and presents as shy but friendly. He smiles a lot and enjoys telling jokes. His appearance is that of a typical adolescent in his baggy blue jeans and oversized shirts. Gary is not typical, however. From approximately the age of nine years, according to information on file, he has been a concern to various school principals as a result of provocative behavior toward younger females. Past incidents include lifting girl's skirts, inappropriate touching, pinching, and exposure of his genitals to others. In addition parental reports indicate that he is belligerent at home and has stolen money from his mother and her friends. He has one previous criminal charge of break and enter for which he received a period of probation. He is currently in therapy, mandated by the court as a result of one charge of assault and two counts of sexual assault. The offenses involved young girls who received bruising to the breast area and to the buttocks. A third incident involved putting a nine year old female into a garbage container.

Gary's attitude, throughout the interviews, was one of intense involvement. For the most part, he responded at a feeling level. He experienced emotional pain in the telling of his story, becoming tearful at times and requiring periods of silence to regain his composure. Though he experienced pain, he also felt pride in being considered important and 'special'.

Table 4
First Order Thematic Abstractions of Gary's Experience

	Excerpts from Transcribed Interviews	Paraphrases	Themes
1.	Charlie is normally bitching about me with my school work and I always get pissed off...I just tell him fuck you or some such shit like that and then I just go down to my room...Just get the hell off my back! It's none of your business what I do.	Perceives adult direction as interference. Responds with anger and withdrawal.	Anger at perceived control by other Taking control Withdrawal
2.	It's nobody's business (what I do).	Believes his actions are no one's business but his own.	Isolation of self Taking control
3.	Mom's normally not at home, because she's normally, after work at Elsie's playing crib or something or she's gone to visit Tom..and then by the time I finally fall asleep she's not home.	Acknowledges that mother's frequent absence generates chronic anxiety.	Loneliness and Isolation Chronic anxiety over mother absence Expectation of negative outcome.
4	It's only been a week (with mom's new boyfriend) but you get a feel that it's a little better. My mom's finding better things to do instead of going to the bar all the time.	Newness of mother's relationship does not preclude his evaluation that it is better.Looks to outsider to control mother's behavior.	Devaluation of self as influential Need for external control
5	...thinking (about mother). What bar she's at, if she's going to get hammered, usual things.	Worry about mother is a usual occurrence.	Chronic worry about mother
6	(Charlie is a friend of mom's)...for a long time...ever since last summer.	Sees a 7 month relationship as a long time friendship.	Lack of rootedness
7	(other long time people)..Mary; that's it.	Recognizes one other long time family friend.Perceives this as limited	Lack of rootedness
8	It (relationship with Mary) was really close. (How close?)...House-wise.	Interprets 'closeness' as physical proximity.	Closeness defined by physical proximity

9	I had a mother that loved me; never had to worry about going far to see grandparents; had lots of place to play, like 2.3 acres or 3.2 acres that he owns and that's not including the forest laying around the house. Running around..chasing the dogs or the cats chasing me.	Idealizes the time before his mother left him emphasizing love and stability of home.	Longing for love and stability of home
10.	(Knew mother loved me because) ...she was normally always there and if she wasn't then one of my grandparents were. And then within a short time my mother would show up again. The most she ever left was to go to the store or something.	Perceives that his mother loved him because she was either physically present or would come back to him quickly.	Physical proximity of as measure of love Fear of abandonment
11.	(unhappy recollections are)...the fact that my father didn't live that far away and he never came to visit...maybe 2 or 3 times a year if that, my mother leaving me there, my grandmother dying.	Unhappy memories of childhood are related to abandonment and losses.	Pain of abandonment Pain of rejection Pain of loss through death
12.	(thoughts)...that she (mother) didn't love me anymore. That was on and off...(thoughts)...that she does love m...felt pain mainly,just pain.	Experiences chaos in thoughts related to maternal love.He is loved...he is not loved. This is painful.	Agony of uncertainty Feeling unloved and unwanted Pain of abandonment
13.	...hurting inside...not crying pain. I held on to it.	Childhood pain is held inside.	Childhood pain is held inside
14.	no (no one knew of pain)	No one notices his pain	Feeling discounted Isolation
15.	(would feel 'up' when) I guess she'd phone; whenever I saw her picture, I guess. I'd feel that, yes she does love me...that still didn't explain the fact why she wasn't there.	Attempts to reassure himself that he is loved are unsuccessful.	Feeling unloved and unwanted Longing for maternal love
16.	I wanted to know if she really did love me.(Any answer?) no.	Question regarding maternal love is unanswered.	Agony of uncertainty
17.	(Early memories with grandpa?) "no" (Holding-hugging you?) "yes" (Remember this?) "no" (How do you know he held you?) "Because I just do, I guess."	Fantasizes that grandfather hugged and held him.	Deep longing for nurturance Protection of childhood memories

18.	Everything was O.K.(with grandma and grandpa). He was strict but not very strict. She was exact same as grandpa. (She was) washing my mouth out with soap...horrid.(laughs)	Chooses safety of neutrality in describing caretakers. Contradiction in laughter over "horrid" punishment.	Protection of childhood memories Minimization as coping mechanism Neutral is safe
19.	He (father) is an asshole.It's plain and simple. He's just a fuckin asshole. I considered him a bad man (when I was little)	Expresses ongoing anger toward his father.	Pain of rejection Anger at rejection
20.	He could have come and visit me at least once a week, but no, he'd have to make it 2 or 3 times a year...sad (after visits)...in stomach ...in head	Pain of paternal neglect is physically felt.	Physical experience of emotional pain Pain of rejection. Indignation at being devalued
21.	...does he still love me?	Seeks paternal love.	Longing for paternal love
22.	When my grandmother died my grandfather was having a really hard time and shit and then my mother just showed up a week or so after that.	Resents his mother appearing without warning at a time when he was needed by his grandfather.	Resentment of mother Powerlessness
23.	I really don't know much about that (grandmother's death). Like the reports and shit they say that she committed suicide, but I don't believe that...that's what really hurts: I don't know. I have no idea	Feels hurt that grandmother's death was not explained to him. Reaches his own conclusions, denying that her death was suicide.	Agony of not knowing Denial
24.	I was really confused. Well I had no idea what the hell was going on. Just really confused I guess. Like why am I at the neighbors? Where is my grandfather? Where is my grandmother?	Feels anger that he was left in a confused state, not knowing his fate or the fate of his grandparents.	Anger at exclusion Agony of not knowing
25.	grandfather came and told me ...no (recall of thoughts)...no (tears).	Has no recall of feelings and thoughts when told of his grandmother's death. Recalls that he did not cry.	Repression of grief
26.	(cry now?) no. (ever?) no...really hurt and really confused why I didn't cry...	Feels confused over grief response. Indicates that he never cries.	Unresolved grief Pain is held inside
27.	I was never told...I'm not sure... how she died...nothing	Indicates that no one tells him anything.	Exclusion Feeling discounted
28.	No (I do not cry)..Yes (I cried when mom abandoned me)	Recalls that the tears he cried when his mother abandoned him were his last.	Emotional shutdown precipitated by abandonment Pain is held within

29.	..and then my mother drives up and I come and ask what's going on and I was just told to go back in the house.	Watches critical events as an outsider	Exclusion Disempowerment
30.	I really didn't know who it (mother) was until I was told. And that's when everything started again. Like why is she here/ Does she still love me? What's going on?	Suppressed hurt of abandonment and questions about whether he is loved by his mother resurface with her sudden appearance.	Suppressed pain of abandonment is triggered by mother's appearance. .
31.	What happened from there is I was packing all my stuff and we were going into Toronto to catch a plane.	Recalls quickness with which his life took a turn.	Lack of control over life's events.
32..	...she is sort of explaining why she had to leave me, explaining that she still loved me and there wasn't a day that she didn't think about me, that she still loved me	Recalls, in detail, mother's explanation of abandonment and affirmations of love.	Longing to be loved.
33.	I'd said goodbye to the neighbors ...really hard. It was about as hard as when my mother left me because it's like I'm leaving my 'family' again...like brothers and sisters to me.	Indicates that neighbors were like family to him.Recalls pain of goodbye.	Pain of parting Longing for family
34.	And then I said goodbye to grandfather...that was a whole lot harder.	Recalls painful goodbye to grandfather.	Painful separation from family
35.	I hope I see you (grandfather) again and not at a funeral, like my grandmother, because my grandfather was older than my grandmother.	Fears permanent loss of grandfather	Fear of loss
36.	He (grandfather) was happy for me that I finally saw my mother again, but he was sad too that I was leaving.	Recalls mixed emotions of grandfather.	Projection. Confusion and fusion of happy/sad feelings
37.	...well not sadness tears or happy tears...tears of hope I'll see you again.	Fears permanent loss of grandfather.	Fear of loss
38.	I didn't know what was going to happen to me...scary really scary.	Fears for his own safety and well-being.	Fear for his own safety Fear of abandonment
39.	I wished (when I was little) that my mother would come and tell me at least or phone ...that she loved me or if she didn't, then she didn't, or something.	Wishes for clarification of mother's feelings toward him.	Agony of uncertainty Longing for clarity

40.	Well the clothes and that that I had, all my toys and that and my bike and all my stuff were left at grandfather's and I never saw them again. Couldn't find them, everybody tried, my grandfather, the neighbors, my uncle...we looked through every box.	Recalls the intense search for lost childhood belongings.	Loss of childhood possessions.
41.	We looked through every box...I outgrew my bike...no (special things) in the box....not really...no (attachment to anything in the box.	Denies having any attachment to lost childhood possessions yet recalls intense search.	Deep pain in loss of childhood items Denial Rationalization
42.	... the surroundings (were hard to leave)...if you go back behind the house and got to this inclined slope...down to this little marsh...up a hill...through a forest...open water...sludging through moss for 3 or 4 meters...across the road to Sugarbush.	Describes in detail physical characteristics of home. Leaving was painful.	Anchoring experience through detailed description Longing for home
43.	I'd still know the place like the back of my hand	Memorizes characteristics of home.	Longing for home
44.	..snowbanks everywhere, snowbank-snowbanks, not these little piles of snow you find up side the road...tunnelling through them. (great laughter and enjoyment in detail of event.)	Recollections of landscape and descriptions of specific events bring laughter and happiness	Holding on to happy moment
45.	(happy?) yeah, it was, actually it was okay. (laughter stops, head down) (wondering about mom? mmm-hmm. (silence)	Pain enters happy recollection.	Pain of abandonment overrides joy of the moment
46.	...that was a happy moment (seeing mom again)...(long pause)...Kid in a candy store happy...like really really happy. Why'd she leave me here though?	Intense joy in reunion with mother is accompanied by pain of abandonment.	Pain of abandonment Fusion of joy and sadness
47.	You're not taking off on me this time (self talk on the plane with mother)	Physical restraint of airplane provides assurance that mother cannot leave.	Fear of abandonment Need for external control Devaluation of self as influential
48.	(meeting step-dad) Oh good somebody new for me to feel awkward and embarrassed about in front of.	Feels awkward and embarrassed meeting stepfather.	Devaluation of self

49.	It was good actually (home with mom and step-dad). It wasn't as good as the family I had in Ontario...like I thought of the neighbor as my mom since I didn't know where the hell mine was.	Confused in description of new home as good. Anger and resentment of mother diminishes happiness of living with her.	Mother triggers happy/sad feelings Anger at maternal neglect
50.	I have a father now (long pause) sort of...not like a real father...it wasn't like he was there...because he's a wire liner so he's gone 2 to 3 weeks at a time...sometimes a month.	Dream of father-son relationship does not materialize.	Longing for father
51.	...nobody to talk to as along the lines of father-son.	Feels deprived of male confidant.	Longing for father Isolation
52.	..last time I seen him (natural father) I was 3 or 4 like when I first came to ...well ..was dropped off...with my grandparents.	Makes the distinction that he did not come to live with his grandparents rather he was dropped off.	Disempowerment Feeling dehumanized in treatment as an object
53.	It (subsequent visit with father) was O.K. I don't see why the hell he had to go to work; he owned both the businesses. I don't see why he couldn't have taken a couple extra days off.	Resents father's lack of attentiveness to him after long absence.	Pain of neglect Anger and indignation in neglect Feeling devalued
54.	It was O.K. (see 53)	It was O.K. means it was not O.K.	Neutral words mask painful experience
55.	There was this little rock...not little, it's about oh there's enough room to suntan on it...that was my rock.(emphasis on my)...I'd swim to it, play on the rock, snorkel around it and stuff.	His rock provides comfort and security. He stays close to it.	Need for safety and security Anchoring experience. Security in isolation
56.	(thoughts) about my father, like where the hell is he? How come he hasn't said anything? How come I haven't heard from him.	Thoughts about absent father plague and anger him.	Agony of uncertainty Pain/anger of paternal rejection
57.	...and then recurring questions about my grandmother, like what the hell's going on. How come nobody's told me how or why or when?	Feels cut-off and angry that information about his grandmother's death is not shared with him. Tormented by unanswered questions.	Hurt at being discounted Agony of not knowing

58.	It (return visit to farm) was strange cause lots of things that were there before were changed, removed--something added--the carpet over the trap door was removed--hardwood floors were there same colors bout patio now enclosed--garden removed--two sheds removed--cellar sealed off--fences moved--road made bigger--going back into the bush (detailed account)	Changes of detail in childhood home seem strange/stressful.	Fear of loss of anchor points. Grief in loss of childhood memories
59.	I felt like my childhood had been destroyed...(pause)...not totally destroyed...remodelled.	Painfully observes a childhood "destroyed."	Pain in childhood destroyed Lack of rootedness
60.	...all the time I was there the person that I saw the least was my father..That's what really pisses me off, no birthday cards, no Christmas cards, no presents, no nothing.	Intense bitterness and pain as father fails to acknowledge his existence.	Pain of rejection Feeling devalued Bitterness and outrage in neglect
61.	...this big box came..it's mine...(I) tipped it...(Step-dad said) don't do that...it's a microwave for your mom...If I hadn't tipped it, then mom would have had to tip it to open it.	Corrective comment made by his stepfather is met with defensive behavior. Seeks reassurance that he did the right thing.	Feeling inadequate
62.	I call him (natural father) a fucking asshole. Not a letter...not a card, nothing...and I'm still waiting.	Ongoing paternal rejection produces pain, anger. Persists in child-like wish for father.	Pain of paternal rejection Anger at source of pain Longing for father
63.	...really painful. I'm not going to have nothing to do with him.	Compensates for pain of rejection by becoming the rejector	Pain of rejection Taking control
64.	I didn't really know him (step-dad) that well (after 4 years).	Recognizes lack of emotional closeness with step-father.	Isolation and Loneliness
65.	...there was no male role model around...I had nobody to go to for like,playing ball or anything. I guess that doesn't matter now...cause I don't play baseball: don't do any sports...I guess that's why...	Laments the lack of a male role model in his life. Sees this as a deprived state.	Hopelessness/bitterness in loss of opportunity Longing for father figure

66.	...I didn't let mom out of my sight for too long...because if she left again...if mom went to the kitchen I'd follow her...although I don't really know why because there was no way out of the kitchen except for going past the living room....	Fears that mother will escape. Trusts only concrete connections.	Fear of abandonment Externalization of control Devaluation of self as influential
67.	Confusion and scaredness that she would take off or something like that.	Anticipates realization of his fear.	Fear of abandonment
68.	It (fear) sort of went away.	Fear of abandonment persists.	Fear of abandonment Longing for end to the fear
69.	Getting friends around the house helped....and t.v.	Experiences temporary relief from anxiety through external distractions.	Escape from painful thoughts
70.	...new location. Pop!..I'm there!	Major transitions in his life are outside of his control.	Disempowerment
71.	(friends), sort of friends, I guess...never met his (one friend's) parents...he never met mine. We were normally outside.	Friends were not close in an emotional sense.	Emotional isolation
72.	Mother would have liked to meet my friends but she was too busy...	Rationalizes mother's lack of involvement.	Rationalization in defence of mother
73	(when couldn't forget)...I was really really depressed.	Persistence of childhood memories results in severe depression.	Depression in childhood memories
74.	...moping around the house depressed, type thing. Like not suicide depressed like most people normally get or most people get;nothing like that. Just depressed, I guess.	Minimizes his state of depression because he was not suicidal. Normalizes severe depression.	Tolerance for negative emotional states Normalization of depression Minimization of depressed state
75.	...T.V. normally helped me forget a bit	Escapes from painful thoughts through external distractions.	Escape from painful thoughts
76.	..no one I could talk to	Indicates that he had no one to talk to.	Emotional isolation
77.	..new school again,friends, problem finding friends	Lifestyle of dislocation results in emotional isolation.	Emotional isolation
78.	(close friends?) No...friends-friends ..sort of acquaintances.	Describes a lack of close emotional ties with peers.	Emotional isolation

79.	Over where we were living there was a trailer park just on the other side, and then the rest of the fourplexes, and then on one side there was the main road, and then across that was the railroad tracks and then the sheep river..and then if you go the other way was a great big field that we (friend and self) used to play in and then there was this forest ...(continues to describe terrain in great detail)	Provides detailed account (almost photographic) of the play area around his home.	Anchoring experience through detail Lack of rootedness
80.	..the construction company came along and they took out the forest,they levelled down Dead Man's and Suicide (hills), they took out half the gully and out with the field. That really pissed me off, cause we had been there pretty much longer than the trailer courts had been, cause the trailer courts got there a couple months after I did, and and then a couple months before we moved out like they were digging everything up. Like we were there when they took out our tree fort that we had built....that really pissed us off.	Laments the gutting of his childhood play area. Feels anger because he was there first.	Pain, anger at loss of anchor points
81.	...it really hurt, I guess, cause they were tearing down some of our memories.	Feels pain as physical destruction of anchor points is equated to tearing down memories.	Fear of loss of childhood Lack of rootedness Emptiness
82.	I get really depressed...it's just . uh, like the memories and that that I have tried to forget are now right there again, and everything is coming back and I try really hard to push those back in my mind....mainly memories of everything that happened between my real father and my mother, when my mother left me, my grandmother dying, leaving all my friends....	Experiences deep depression with resurfacing of unwanted memories related to abandonment, rejection and loss.Much effort is expended in suppression of childhood memories.	Resurfacing of painful memories Depression in recall Suppression of childhood memories
83.	If I get pissed off,(painful memories come back) like, or if I have to do something very important and I'm told that I can't, then I really get hurt, like, crying-hurt type thing.	Anger in the present results in resurfacing of painful childhood memories Feels emotional pain when others attempt to control him.	Painful childhood memories are cued in the present Anger as a trigger Control by others as a trigger

84.	Somebody put (an obscene) sticker on her locker ..and she thought it was me so she felt really hurt and I guess that brought back some bad, bad memories from long ago (for her).So I had to talk to her.I was pretty much in tears.	Projects surfacing of painful memories and his own need to have feelings acknowledged, unto peer..	Projection of affect Resurfacing of painful memories
85.	I put it (sticker) on the back of the teacher. I'm not sure (if sticker was obscene) I wasn't paying attention. (gross?)..I guess, I'm not sure.	Denies recall of details with regard to a prank played on a teacher.	Denial as defence
86.	If you hurt somebody's feelings that's really hard to try and fix.	Recognizes that hurt feeling are difficult to repair.	Hurt feelings are difficult to repair
87.	I know how it feels to be pushed over the edge with teasing.	Experience of being teased has been painful for him.	Isolation Feeling devalued
88.	...an unwanted feeling	Feels unwanted	Feeling unwanted
89.	...Like I had felt that (see 87.,88.) before ...when my mother left me and pretty much every time I transferred to a new school, I guess...sort of unwanted feeling like every kid would have or have had.	Teasing triggers feelings of being unwanted related to abandonment. Normalizes feelings of being unwanted.	Painful childhood memories are cued in the present. Teasing as a trigger Normalization of unwanted feeling
90.	('home') is a place where you go to live where somebody loves you, I guess, or where you know you are loved.	Home is described as a place where you know you are loved.	Longing for love
91.	('home') is with my mom, I guess...me sitting on the couch, my mom sitting in the chair and we're watching T.V.,sitting there..just me and my mom. (see 90.)	Security of home is visualized as being in close proximity to mother.	Physical closeness as measure of love
92.	(close to mom?) that we're spending some time together, because I'm not going to be able to see here that much now. It's hard to spend time together to know you still love each other.	Closeness to mother is defined as physical proximity. Needs to see mother to know he is loved.	Physical closeness as measure of love
93.	Knowing that we love each other ...(long silence)...that's a really good feeling ...I guess	Unsure that being loved is a good feeling. Confused about mother's love.	Confusion of affect Feeling unloved

94.	...(I would like) spending a little bit more time together...new job...from 8:00 to 3:00 A.M....so really only time is...and .... that's it because she's normally sleeping all day...	Wishes for more time with mother.	Isolation and loneliness
95.	Shit...I don't know even half of them (mother's male friends)..like Dave, Doug Joe, Bob, Kevin, Paul.(names many) (kept track?) ya ...or try! I can always tell whoever's on the phone..slow voice is...	Keeps close track of mother's male friendships.	Keeping track of mother Taking control
96.	But I'm kind of concerned that one of her relationships will go too far and he'll say the wrong thing or she'll say the wrong thing and then poof..my mom's miserable and , like she's upset	Expresses concern for mother's well-being but feels powerless in her sudden changes of mood.	Taking care of mother Disempowerment
97.	She normally cranks the damn C.D. that I already heard fifteen million times. She just sits in the rocking chair....and just rocks back and forth, and that's it back and forth ..back and forth.. It just normally happens...if she's really depressed.	Experiences anger and frustration with regard to mother's repeated depressive episodes. Detailed account of her behavior.	Anger at mother
98.	If mom sits in the rocking chair and starts playing it (C.D.) then I know something's wrong. Before she'll press play, I'll go over and ask her if she's o.k. If she just pops it in and sits down on the couch or something right beside me, then I know everything's O.K.	Comforts and consoles mother.Provides detailed account of her behavior.	Taking care of mother.
99.	..I didn't know where she was, cause I was up until five-thirty in the morning still waiting for her to come home, see if she was o.k.	Feels worried that something might happen to mother.	Fear of loss Taking care of mother
100.	It's just, I'm not sure.(who looks after whom)	Recognizes confusion in parent-child roles.	Confusion in parent- child roles
101.	like on certain days I'm always checking up on what she's doing and then the other day "what are you doing...playing nintendo...what game...whoa! chill out mother (laughing and enjoying)	Experiences confusion of roles. Feels great pleasure when mother plays her part.	Longing for nurturance Confusion in Parent-child roles

102.	(still afraid mom won't come back?)..um, no, not any more, no, not that much, because I,m sort of old enough now that if I have to know where she is, like, it's just a quick phone call away to find out, cause if Dave's not with her then I'll phone Bob...Bob always knows where mom is..just like that (snaps fingers)	Continues to fear loss of mother and has a system for tracking her down.	Controlling fear of abandonment by systematic tracking of mother.
103.	...feel worried ..something might happen to her...	Fears mother might be taken away from him.	Fear of loss
104.	love, understanding (at home) every household must have--even mine-a little bit of anger now and then. Uh...sadness...not exactly sad sadness, just depression/ both of ours (mother's and his)	Normalizes depression and anger within the home.	Normalization of depression
105.	(I get depressed when) I hurt somebody's feelings and when I hear that it brought back a lot of bad memories (for girl he hurt) depression all through the time.	Feels depressed if he hurts others feelings.Projects resurfacing of painful memories onto others.	Resurfacing of painful memories Hurting others feelings as trigger Projection
106.	I normally get depressed of losing something that I really cared for, It (see 105) was just like the depression of angry with myself.	Normally gets depressed when he loses something he cares for.and when angry at himself. for hurting another's feelings.	Depression accompanies losses Hurting another triggers anger and depression
107.	Mom and Wayne(step-dad) were having fights (at time of first sexual impropriety)...got me really depressed...bummed out.. .	Identifies feelings of depression over marital discord at the time of his first identified offense	Depression over marital discord at the time of his first offense.
108.	Not much to tell I just flipped up her dress...	Minimizes offense	Minimization of offense
109.	It didn't feel too well (after)...I was angry at myself	Feels angry at self in relation to offense	Anger at self in relation to offense
110.	(second offense?...long silence)...a little hard (to talk about)...head down...silence)	Feels shame and embarrassment in discussing sexual offenses	Shame and embarrassment surrounding sexual offenses
111.	We were fooling around and then I guess it got out of hand from there, uh, cause what happened was, I had flicked her tit....and then she hit me and I flicked it again...and that's pretty much as far as that incident went ...pushing around kidding and then it got out of hand.	Minimizes play fighting that escalated into sexual touching.	Minimization of offense Denial as defence

112.	There was no warning...nothing...I just did it...(sexual rush?) no, there was nothing.	Feels powerless in lack of control related to offenses	Feeling powerless
113.	what happened with the next charge was...I pinched her (other victim) ass once or twice..watching a movie...it carried on to flicking...her boob...she pinched me so I hit her and then she pinched me and then I pinched her ass....intended to hit her arm..(instead of breast) ..Okay that (buttocks) was intentional cause she pinched me, so I pinched her back.	Rationalizes behavior related to sexual offense. Denies intentionality.	Denial of intentionality Rationalization of involvement
114.	....She (further victim) kicked me so I deposited her in the garbage....mainly gloating...that's what you get for kicking me and I'll show you.	Justifies aggressive behavior towards younger female saying it was retaliatory.	Needing power and control Rationalization for aggressive response
115.	It's really scary like thinking how to act...how not to act (with female friends)....I might do the wrong thing ...they might misinterpret.	Frightened by lack of trust in ability to control his own actions.	Lack of trust in self Fear of loss of control
116.	...so I've got to hold back some of my feelings, some of my actions...the wondering and the feelings that I've had in the past...like things about my grandmother, and why the girls spread it around the school	Identifies a need to control his actions and his feelings.Past feelings and thoughts enter present behavior.	Confusion and fusion of emotions related to past and present.
117.	Feelings of wondering...(then) really bummed out about everything.	Experiences depression following offense. This is associated with a state of wondering.	Depression accompanies offenses
118.	I feel really angry at myself..pissed off because I did something so stupid.	Directs anger at self	Anger at self Devaluing self
119.	so I've got to hold back ...some of my actions...fooling around, like mostly the pushing, shoving, pinching, things like that...(feels) trapped..confined and that I can't do much of anything without screwing up	Feels trapped and confined in attempts to control his own behavior. Devalues his own ability to behave correctly.	Feelings of entrapment accompany self control. Devaluing self
120.	(trapped?)...like pain, I guess...all over (see 119)	Feelings of entrapment result in pain that is bodily felt.	Pain in self-control

121.	...pretty happy whenever I'm trying to forget the past...well the things that have hurt me..or whenever I have forgot about them.	State of happiness depends on ability to shut out painful memories.	Suppression of painful memories Sadness in memories
122.	(forgotten?) well not totally, no. whenever I get a reminder of what has happened, or something that is similar ...than that brings a little bit of the memories..(like).one of the old pictures of me and her (mom)....(like) ...Saturday night I had come home and there was nobody there and no note...no call no nothing...worrying if she would come home..	Ongoing life events serve as triggers for painful memories and associated feelings.	Resurfacing of painful childhood memories Mother absence as trigger
123.	nobody tells me where or when they're going to be home...4:00 in the morning no call no nothing (see 122)	Expresses anger at being discounted by his mother.	Anger with mother Anger at being discounted
124.	...angry and happy (when mom comes home)	Feels mixed emotions of anger and happiness toward mother	Confusion of anger/happiness
125	(dad?)...I will have nothing to do with him....(feeling?)..hate!...like my stomach has been turned upside down.	Feels hatred and anger towards father which is bodily felt.Protects self by becoming the rejector.	Pain/fear of paternal rejection Anger towards father

Table 5
Second Order Thematic Abstractions of Gary's Experience

	Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1	Lack of Rootedness/ Need to Anchor through Concrete Detail (6, 7, 40, 42, 44, 55, 58, 59, 79, 80, 81)	**Attempts to construct a meaningful world;** expectation that friendships aren't lasting; awareness that few significant people are present who have a shared history; brings no items of the past into his present as all were lost.; seeks comfort and security in the description of his rock, "that was my rock.;" describes detailed physical characteristics of homes as though to make tangible his elusive experience; fears changes to the physical characteristics of home; attempts to become anchored in the shifting sands of his experience, "felt like my childhood had been destroyed." destruction of his playground was like the "tearing down some of our memories."
2.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (12, 15, 16, 21, 87, 88, 89, 92, 93)	**"Hurting inside," in the feeling of being unloved** ; seeking maternal love through photographs; experiences physical pain in the emotional hurt of paternal rejection.; feels unwanted in being teased by peers; needs mothers physical presence to feel he is loved; feels pain and uncertainty in mothers love.
3.	Pain of Abandonment/ Rejection (11, 13, 19, 20, 32, 45, 46, 56, 62, 63, 125)	**Deeply pained by maternal abandonment and paternal rejection**; vivid recall of mother's explanation of abandonment; momentary joy in recollection of happy times is spoiled by pain of abandonment; physical experience of emotional pain in paternal rejection; anger in deep pain, father is a "bad man" and a "fuckin asshole."; pain persists in child-like wish for father.
4.	Fear of Abandonment/ Rejection (3, 5, 10, 38, 47, 66, 67, 68, 102, 122, 125)	**Fears being left by mother and rejected by father**; experiences chronic anxiety in mother's absence; recalls in detail when mother was "always there"; expresses fear for his own safety when back in his mother's care; feels assured that his mother cannot leave when on an airplane with her; fears mother's escape; systematically tracks mother's whereabouts; worries, "if she would come home"; protects self from pain of paternal rejection by naming himself the rejector.
5.	Pain of Loss (33, 34, 40, 41, 42, 59, 65, 80)	**Grieves loss of people, places and things;** pain in many good-byes to neighbors, to grandfather, to surroundings; grieves the loss of childhood memories in seeing physical change to place of home; overcome with depression in recurrence of memories pertaining to multiple losses, "real father and mother, when my mother left me , my grandmother dying and leaving all my friends."

6.	Fear of Loss (17, 18, 35, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44, 58, 79, 80, 81, 96, 98, 99, 103)	**Fears what he values will be taken from him;** fears his grandfather will die like his grandmother; worried that something might happen to mother, waiting all night "to see if she was okay"; takes care of mother in a reversal of roles; creates a meaningful reality in fear of a childhood lost, protects childhood memories through use of neutral language, minimizing, denial and attempts to concretize elusive experience; discomforted by changes to childhood homes.
7.	Child in the Dark (12, 16, 23, 24, 29, 39, 56, 57)	**Agonizes in a void of uncertainty;** chronic inner turmoil follows abandonment in unanswered questions of whether he is loved or not; agonizes in the weighing of dichotomous possibilities; longs for clarity, "I wished my mother would come and tell me...that she loved me or if she didn't ...or something"; feels pain in not knowing about the circumstances of grand-mother's death; "confused, like why am I at the neighbors, where is my grandfather, where is my grandmother? " Agonizes in a search for answers pertaining to paternal rejection; feels resentment toward mother, " nobody tells me where or when they're going to be home."
8.	Devaluation of self (4, 14, 27, 47, 48, 52, 53, 57, 60, 61, 66, 87, 110, 118, 119, 123)	**Feels devalued by others and devalues self;** looks to outsider to influence mother; no one noticed his pain; lacks confidence in his ability to endear mother to him,looking for safety of physical boundaries to keep her close: feels awkward and embarrassed meeting someone new; feels like an object "dropped off" with his grandparents; feels devalued in experience of paternal neglect and in father's failure to acknowledge his existence; feels discounted in wondering why "nobody told me how (grandmother died), why or when; " feels shame and embarrassment discussing sexual offense." Feels defensive and insecure with corrective comment; pain in ridicule by peers; depression accompanies anger at self; fearful that he will do the "wrong thing"; belittles self in relation to offenses; demonstrates shame and embarrassment in discussing his offensive behaviors.
9.	Bitterness and Anger (1, 19, 20, 22, 24, 53, 60, 62, 65, 80, 81, 83, 97, 109, 118, 123, 124, 125)	**Pain turns to anger in the realization of neglect;** feels anger at perceived control by others; hatred is expressed in a stream of obsenities in relation to his father; indignation at being devalued by father; bitterness in deprived state of lacking a father-figure; anger at the gutting of his play area as he fears the loss of childhood memories; anger triggers recurrence of painful childhood memories; depression results when angry at self; feels angry with himself in relation to offenses, "pissed off because I did something so stupid."; experiences anger toward mother in relation to perceived insensitivity and for ignoring his need to know of her whereabouts.

10.	Profound Sadness/Depression (20, 25, 26, 28, 45, 73, 74, 82, 83, 86, 104, 105, 106, 107, 117)	**Physionomic experience in pain of sadness/ depressive episodes;** feels a sadness "in stomach and head" in relation to paternal rejection; pain is too deep for tears as he holds it within; hides grief from self and from others in relation to grandmother's death; pain of abandonment spoils happy recollections; normalizes state of depression in self and in mother; suppresses childhood memories, "I try really hard to push those back in my mind."; sees hurt feelings as "really hard to try and fix; experiences depression with loss, with perceived control by others and when he hurts another's feelings.
11.	Confusion / Fusion of Affect (36, 45, 46, 49, 93, 116, 124)	**Dichotomous emotions fuse in a state of confusion;** experiences happy-sad feelings in presence of mother; emotional pain suddenly enters happy memories; confusion in relation to mother-son affection, "that we love each other that's a really good feeling ...I guess."; fuses past and present in a confused description of affect related to self-control.
12.	Disempowerment (4, 22, 29, 31,47, 52,66, 70, 83, 112, 115, 119, 120)	**Feels helpless in an environment that disempowers;** resents mother just "showing up" after years of absence; recalls being sent into the house with no explanation for his mother's unexpected presence; feels overwhelmed by the swiftness with which his life takes a turn; feels a lack of self-determination in being "dropped off" at his grandparents; feels helpless that major transitions in his life are outside of his control..."new location...pop...I'm there!;"; lacks influence over mother, "poof, she's miserable; being told what to do causes "crying-type hurt; Feels a lack of control from within fearing he'll do "the wrong thing." ;feels entrapped when attempting to prevent his own offensive behavior.
13.	Taking Control (1, 2, 66, 83, 95, 101, 102, 114, 119, 120)	**Takes back some power;** profanities accompany adult direction; "It's nobody's business what I do." Is hypervigilent of mother, keeping track of her whereabouts; overpowers others in relation to offenses; experiences pain in taking control of self.
14.	Physical Proximity as a Measure of Emotional Closeness (8, 10, 90, 91, 92)	**Needs to be physically close to feel loved;** describes 'close' relationship by referring to physical distance between houses; knows his mother loved him because prior to his abandonment "she was always there" or within a short time would "show up" again; Maternal love is associated with physical proximity, "we're watching T.V., sitting there, just me and my mom."

15.	Emotional and Physical Isolation (1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 26, 29, 51, 64, 71, 76, 77, 78, 87, 94)	**Isolation is imposed by self and by other;** withdraws to his room following interpersonal conflict, believes his actions are no one's business but his own; feels loneliness as, "mom's normally not at home."; pain is held inside, hidden from others; feels an outsider to his own experience in exclusion by others; feels regret in having, "nobody to talk to as along the lines of father-son."; describes a lack of bonding with his step-father; perceives friends as "sort of friends" as "acquaintances".; experiences difficulty finding new friends: feels unwanted when teased by peers; recognizes a void in having no-one to talk to; wishes he could spend more time with his mother.
16.	Pain in Resurfacing of Childhood Memory (82, 83, 84, 89, 105, 116, 121, 122)	**Ongoing life events trigger painful memories;** feels depressed because, " the memories that I have tried to forget are right there again...I try really hard to push those back." Anger in others attempts to control triggers memories, "then I get hurt, crying -type hurt." Projects his own process on to female friend assuming her hurt feelings result in resurfacing of her own painful memories; teasing by peers and transferring to a new school reminds him of the unwanted feeling in his experience of maternal abandonment; feels depressed if another experiences pain in resurfacing of memories; recognizes a familiarity in present negative affect, "the wondering and feeling that I've had in the past; fuses past and present; mother absence and old photographs trigger painful recollections and associated affect.
17.	Self-Protection / Preservation (1, 2, 13, 18, 23, 25, 28, 41, 54, 69, 72, 74, 75, 82, 89, 104, 108, 111, 113, 114, 116, 121)	**Ongoing use of defense mechanism;** withdraws from others in conflict; hides pain from others; protects childhood memories by use of neutral language in descriptions of caretakers; Laughter accompanies description of "horrid punishment" (washing mouth out with soap) in an attempt to minimize negativity of experience; grief is repressed in the suicidal death of his grand-mother; protects self from deep pain in loss of childhood belongings through denial and rationalization,claiming no attachment to the items and stating. " I outgrew my bike."; escapes through external distractions of friends and T.V; rationalizes mother's neglect; normalizes and minimizes experience of depression and feelings of being unwanted; exerts much energy in conscious efforts to suppress painful memories; uses minimization and denial in relation to offenses; rationalizes aggressive response.

18.	Sense of Longing (9, 15, 17, 21, 32, 33, 39, 42, 43, 50, 51, 62, 65, 68, 90, 100, 101)	**Longs to fill the emptiness:** Longs for love and stability in idealized account of a mother "who loved me" and his grandparents' place of home; longs for love from mother and father; views neighbors as his family in a longing for family ;recalls, in detail, maternal words of love; longs for clarity and answers; describes, in detail, physical characteristics of home in longing for place of home; longs for a father-figure in his step-father; persists in wish for father, " not a card...nothing...and I'm still waiting." longs for a childhood lost ; longs for an end to fears; enjoys being nurtured when mother plays her part.

Table 6

Third Order Thematic Abstractions of Gary's Experience

	Essential Experience	Definition
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (2,3)	"Hurting" inside in a feeling of being unloved by mother and father. Experience of desertion by both parents. Feeling unwanted by peers.
2.	Profound Sadness/Depression (3, 5, 10, 16)	Experience of deep emotional hurt at parental abandonment and rejection. Grief related to loss of people, places and things. Physionomic experience of pain in sadness and depression. Recurring sadness and depression related to resurfacing of childhood memories.
3.	Devaluation of Self (8)	Experience of being devalued by others and devaluing self. Feeling discounted by others, as though invisible.Experience of being objectified; moved, removed and placed.Feeling unimportant to those who matter most. Lacking confidence in his own self worth.
4.	Confusion and Inner Turmoil (7, 11)	Experience of chronic inner turmoil as important questions pertaining to significant persons and life events remain unanswered. Fusion of dichotomous emotions and past with present. Ambivalent feelings toward mother.
5.	Loneliness and Isolation (14, 15)	Experience of emotional and physical isolation which is self and other imposed. Experience of superficiality in relationship with others. Experience of closeness as physical rather than emotional.
6.	Disempowerment (12,13)	A sense of helplessness as life's events are perceived as outside of his control. Lack of involvement in his own destiny. Control by others. Lack of power and control 'within'. Experience of taking back power by rebelling against adult direction, attempting to control mother's movements and by overpowering others.
7.	Lack of Rootedness/Need to Anchor Through Concrete Detail (1)	Experience of lack of rootedness in a shifting, unstable foundation; insecurity. Experience that nothing is lasting, constructing a picture that is. Pain of lost childhood.

8.	Fear of What Lies Ahead (4, 6)	Fear that past patterns will be repeated. Profound anxiety related to fear of abandonment and rejection; fear that others will voluntarily leave him. Fear of loss; fear that what he values will be taken from him forever.
9.	Self-Protection and Preservation (17)	Seeking protection and preservation of the emotional self through use of psychological defense mechanisms.
10.	Anger and Resentment (9)	Experience of anger in the pain of violation and neglect. Sense of being mistreated. Bitterness toward mother and father. Anger at self.
11.	Sense of Longing (18)	Experience of emptiness and desire to fill the void. Experience of longing for what has been missed in childhood.

SYNTHESIS OF GARY'S EXPERIENCE

Quotations in the following synthesis are taken from Table 4.

Feeling Unloved and Unwanted

Pains of abandonment and rejection feed into a sense of being unloved by those most significant in a young boy's life. Gary's thoughts after his mother left him were, "that she didn't love me, felt pain mainly, just pain." Photographs and occasional phone calls create a hope that is contaminated by his reality that it did not explain, "the fact why she wasn't there." Childhood pain is too deep for tears: "hurting inside,not crying pain. I held onto it." Paternal rejection is compounded by the knowledge that his father lives close by but does not visit. He feels, "sad, in stomach, in head." Pain is physically felt. Gary's joy at his mother's return fuses with insecurity: "Why'd she leave me here though?" Feelings of being unloved and unwanted persist in an adolescent who needs mother's physical proximity to feel loved. No certainty of love exists for the child, now a teenager. Peers reinforce feelings of being unwanted as he is "pushed over the edge with teasing." Feelings of being unloved by his father persist as deep pain turns to anger in a child's describing of father as a "bad man" and a teenager's stream of profanities.

Profound Sadness and Depression

Themes of pain of abandonment and rejection, pain of loss, profound sadness and depression, and pain in resurfacing of childhood memories, merge in the essential theme of profound sadness and depression. Multiple losses contribute to Gary's sadness in a series of painful goodbyes as he grieves loss of people, places and things: "I'd say good-bye to the neighbors...really hard...about as hard as when mom left me...and then good-bye to grandfather...that was a whole lot harder." All childhood possessions were lost. He experiences pain in leaving the surroundings of his grandfather's home, describing the marsh, the forest, the water and the road. Changes to his childhood home on a return visit are vividly recalled: "I felt like my childhood had been destroyed." Gary grieves the loss of childhood. In adolescence, he experiences depression in a recurrence of memories pertaining to multiple losses: "real father and mother, when my mother left me, my grandmother dying and leaving all my friends." Pain is too deep for tears and is bodily felt. The joyful expression of a happy moment is contaminated as pain of abandonment enters as a spoiler. When he cannot "forget" experiences of his past he feels depressed, "like the memories, everything is coming back." Painful memories are triggered in the present, "If I get pissed off or if I'm told I can't, then I really get hurt, like crying-type hurt type thing." Resurfacing of painful memories also occurs in the present when he hurts someone's feelings, when he gets "depressed of losing something that I really cared for," when there is conflict within his family and when he is angry at himself. Gary confuses and fuses past memories with present events. He believes, "hurt feelings are really hard to fix." He is exposed to depressive episodes of his mother which he describes in great detail. His offenses result in feelings of depression. Happiness exists if he has "forgotten" childhood memories but they are "not totally forgotten" as old photographs and mother absence trigger painful recollections and associated affect. Childhood sadness persists for Gary in adolescence.

Devaluation of Self

Gary's experience is one of being invisible to others in a discounting of his existence. It is to be a 'pawn' rather than a 'player' in a game with unfair odds. Gary feels devalued by others and devalues himself. He perceives himself as having insufficient self worth to influence his mother. His childhood pain goes unnoticed by others. A sense of smallness emerges in being excluded from explanations of his grandmother's sudden death. He lacks confidence in his ability to endear his mother to him, seeking the safety of physical boundaries to keep her close. When on an airplane with his mother he thinks, " you're not taking off on me this time." Meeting his step-father results in the thought, "somebody new for me to feel awkward and embarrassed in front of." He corrects his comment, "when I first came to live with my grandparents," stating instead, "well, was dropped off," much as an object might be. Intense pain and bitterness are experienced as his father fails to acknowledge his existence, "no birthday cards, no Christmas cards, no nothing." He seeks reassurance that he has done the right thing in a correction made by his step-father years ago. An experience of being teased by peers compounds a sense of inadequacy. He feels ashamed and embarrassment in discussing sexual offenses as long silences and a bowed head precede discussion. Anger at self results in depression and a perception of himself as "stupid". He lacks trust in himself: "It's really scary like thinking how to act, how not to act. I might do the wrong thing. (I) can't do much of anything without screwing up." Gary experiences an ongoing sense that he is unimportant as no message awaits him in his mother's unexplained absence. A smiling face and a sociable manner do not conceal the insecure child inside.

Confusion and Inner Turmoil

The essential theme of 'Confusion and Inner Turmoil' encompasses the themes of 'Child in the Dark' and 'Confusion/Fusion of Affect. Gary agonizes in a void of uncertainty. The experience is one of inner chaos and anxiety. Gary experiences chronic turmoil following abandonment in unanswered questions of whether he is loved or not. He agonizes in a weighing of dichotomous possibilities. He longs for clarity. "I wished my mother would come and tell me that she loved me or she didn't or something. I wanted to know." He feels pain in not knowing the circumstances of his grandmother's death. "That's what really hurts. I don't know how come nobody told me how or why or when?" He agonizes in a search for answers pertaining to paternal rejection. Dichotomous emotions fuse in a state of confusion as he experiences happy-sad feelings and both anger and relief in the presence of his mother. Laughter ceases as pain enters a happy recollection. Past and present merge in a confused description of self-control. There is a tug-of-war inside Gary that perpetuates an anxious state.

Loneliness and Isolation

The essential theme of "A Lonely Child' was derived in a clustering of the themes of Physical Proximity as a Measure of Closeness' and 'Emotional and Physical Isolation'. Gary experiences emotional and physical isolation which is self and other imposed. Closeness is perceived as physical proximity rather than emotional, as Gary describes a close relationship in terms of distance between houses. He knows his mother loved him because, prior to his abandonment, "she was always there" or would "show up" again. Maternal love is associated with physical proximity: "We're watching T.V, sitting there, just me and my mom." Gary isolates himself, withdrawing to his room following interpersonal conflict. He indicates that his actions are no one's business but his own. He experiences loneliness as, "mom's normally not at home." He hides his feelings from others, "hurting inside, not crying pain. I held onto it." He feels excluded like an outsider to his own experience. He regrets having, "nobody to talk to along the lines of father-son," and describes a lack of bonding with his step-father. Peers are described as "acquaintances" and he experiences difficulty finding new friends. He recognizes a void in having "no one to talk to" and wishes he could spend more time with his mother.

Disempowerment

Gary experiences a sense of helplessness in an environment that disempowers. He feels overwhelmed by the swiftness with which his life takes a turn, being deprived of involvement in his own destiny. Major transitions are perceived as being out of his control: "new location, pop, I'm, there. Poof, she's miserable." He experiences a lack of self-determination as he is moved, removed and placed; a 'pawn' rather that a player in a game with unfair odds. He feels a lack of power within, fearing his ability to control his own behavior: "It's scary, like thinking how to act, how not to act. I might do the wrong thing." Gary experiences a sense of entrapment when attempting to control his own behavior, "so I've got to hold back, trapped, confined, like pain all over."

The experience of a powerless child becomes a youth's need to regain a sense of control. Gary rebels against adult direction with profanities and lack of compliance: "It's nobody's business what I do." Painful memories resurface and anger results when other's attempt to exert control. He exhibits a strong desire to control his mother's movements: "I didn't let mom out of my sight for too long. I'd follow her." He remains hypervigilent of his mother, keeping track of her male companions. Gary exhibits a need for power and control He overpowers younger females in assaultive behaviors: "I deposited her in the garbage, mainly gloating, that's what you get for kicking me and I'll show you."

Fear of What Lies Ahead

The themes of 'Fear of Abandonment/Rejection' and 'Fear of Loss' combine to form the essential theme of 'Fear of What Lies Ahead." Past experience of abandonment, rejection and loss contribute to a fear that painful patterns will be repeated. Fear of maternal abandonment persists as he experiences chronic anxiety in his mother's absence. He systematically tracks her whereabouts worrying, "if she would come home." When back in his mother's care, he fears for his own safety. He protects himself from pain of paternal rejection by naming himself the rejector: "I will have nothing to do with him." Gary experiences profound fear that what he values will be taken from him. He worries that his grandfather will die like his grandmother. He fears that his mother may be taken from him and waits all night, "to see if she's okay." He takes care of his mother in a reversal of roles. Chronic anxiety in a young child continues in the fears of an adolescent.

Lack of Rootedness/Need to Anchor Through Concrete Detail

Few tangible ties to the past exist for Gary in the loss of childhood possessions and the absence of lasting friendships. He memorizes detailed physical characteristics of home as though to become anchored in the 'shifting sands' of his experience: "I'd know the place like the back of my hand." A rock, "that was my rock," provides security. He fears changes to physical characteristics of home feeling like, "my childhood had been destroyed." Destruction of his playground "really hurt 'cause they were tearing down some of our memories." In the fear of a childhood lost, he attempts to construct a meaningful world and to protect childhood memories through the use of neutral language, minimization and denial.

Self Protection and Preservation:

Gary protects against fears related to pain of abandonment, rejection and multiple losses. He withdraws into isolation following conflict, escapes anxiety through external distractions of television and friends, and hides his feelings from others. Grief is repressed in relation to the suicidal death of his grandmother. He indicates that he never cries, as he hides deep pain from himself. He protects himself from the pain in loss of childhood items through rationalization and denial, claiming no attachment to lost items though he recalls the intense search. He normalizes and minimizes the experience of depression and feelings of being unwanted, "like every kid would have." He rationalizes maternal neglect. Childhood memories are protected by use of neutral language in descriptions of his caretakers. Laughter accompanies his description of a "horrid" punishment in an attempt to minimize negative experience. He exerts much energy in conscious efforts to suppress painful memories, "...and I try really hard to push those back in my mind." In relation to his offenses, he uses minimization, denial and rationalization of aggressive response in an attempt to protect his fragile sense of self worth.

Anger and Resentment

Pain turns to anger in the recognition of neglect and violation. Profanities abound in the language of an angry teen who once perceived his father as a "bad man" and now as "a fuckin asshole...hate...like my stomach has been turned upside down." Gary experiences indignation in relation to his mother's perceived insensitivity, neglect and episodes of depression: "Nobody tells me, 4:00 A.M., no call no nothing." He reflects on the times that he was 'left in the dark' and realizes, "I had no idea what the hell was going on." The angered adolescent perceives a state of deprivation that the child knew as pain. A victim-stance emerges in reflections of childhood opportunity lost: "I had nobody to go to for, like, playing basketball or anything. I guess that doesn't matter now. I don't do sports. I guess that's why." Though the anger emerges the pain persists.

A Child With Longing

An empty longing is experienced in a recognition of what has been missed. Gary longs for love and stability in idealized accounts of a mother "who loved me" and of his grandparents place of home. He longs for nurturance. Though he has no recall of his grandfather hugging or holding him he indicates that he knows this was the case, "because I just do I guess." He longs for love from his mother recalling in detail maternal words of love. Despite bitterness in paternal rejection he persists in his desire for father; "and I'm still waiting." He views neighbors as brothers and sisters in a longing for family. He longs for a father figure in his step-father, "I have a father, now." Reflections of a childhood lost culminate in a longing to fill an empty void.

Summary

A young boy feels pain in abandonment by his mother as he is left without warning. He seeks answers to her disappearance but finds none. He wonders, too, why his father doesn't visit or acknowledge him in some way. He feels unloved and unwanted. He rejoices at his mother's return several years later, but at the same time grieves the death of his grandmother. He cannot accept reports that she committed suicide and represses grief. He feels sadness in the the loss of his grandfather, neighbors and friends. He feels pain in the loss of many people, places and things in his life. He remains confused about his grandmother's death and about many other things in life. He feels no one listened to his questions or cared enough to answer them. He feels like a pawn as he is moved, removed and placed. He tries to memorize every detail of his childhood homes but forget all associated pain. He is unsuccessful in his efforts to do so. He is intensely fearful that his mother will leave him again and doesn't feel safe in her love. He feels angry at perceived neglect and violation. He fights with others. He is convicted of two counts of sexual assault against females.

INTRODUCTION TO CHRIS

"When I compare myself to anybody else that I know of, anybody else, I've got good grades."

Chris is a 16 year old male of slender build. He is attractive, meticulously dressed and well spoken. Chris resides with his parents, three younger natural siblings and a same-age foster sister who has been in the home for six years. Other foster children have been periodically present in the home. It is worthy of note that other foster children were removed from the home following Chris's charges and as a result of his father having been charged with sexual assault of a 13 year old female (outside of the family). His father was subsequently acquitted.

Chris will be commencing grade eleven. He maintains a high academic standing which is congruent with superior intellectual capacity indicated in intelligence and ability testing. He has no history of failure at school. In junior high he was the class president, however, due to his involvement in minor vandalism and 'pranks' played on others he lost his position.

With regard to criminal behavior, Chris admits to shoplifting but he has not been prosecuted in this regard. He has stolen a knife from a store and was caught by the store manger, reprimanded and then released. At the age of 15 years, he was convicted of two counts of sexual exploitation and two counts of invitation to touching. The offenses involved two young boys, age 3 and 5 years. He was babysitting at the time. Offenses involved touching the boys, forcing them to perform various sexual acts and watching the boys masturbate and expose themselves.

During the interviews, Chris presented as friendly and cooperative. His manner was concise and somewhat logical. He tended to give socially desirable responses, seeking to present himself and his family in a favorable light. Responses appeared to be more superficial than with the other three participants though he periodically forgot himself and related at an affective level. It is in this context, that the following results are presented.

Table 7
First Order Thematic Abstractions of Chris's Experience

	Excerpts From Transcribed Interviews	Paraphrases	Themes
1.	(Description of mom) Uh, perfect.	Describes mom as perfect.	Protecting mother
2.	(Description of dad). He was a bit scarier, cause he's so big...he's a body builder but he's always fun. He's the happy type, real nice type. He's always been that way.	Expresses fear and admiration of father	Fear of father Idealizes father Mixed emotions
3.	He (brother) is in the twelve year-old stage and I'm in the fifteen, and it's really bad, eh, so we argue lots. My sisters are in the nine-year-old stage too, so they argue too.	Perceives sibling conflict as pre-determined by stages rather than individual differences. Justifies rivalry.	External locus of control External criteria as a measure of worth Justification
4.	I had been shoplifting for a long time then...and I'd stole a knife and they caught me. And then the manger phoned up and he gave me this long lecture and he scared me. Since then I've never shoplifted.	Describes fear tactics as effective in curbing delinquent behaviors.	External locus of control
5.	...me always screwing around in school, I was always bad in grade eight or nine. Its just the way I pick my friends ...influenced by other people and we'd do bad stuff. We'd never get caught so it was fun, a power trip.	Describes self as bad. Explains delinquent behavior as resulting from peer influence. Enjoys the powerful feeling of not getting caught.	Devaluation of self. External locus of control Need for power
6.	He (dad) like scares me out of doing anything bad. He doesn't hit me or nothing; he just shakes me and, oh, scared. That's enough to stop me. He doesn't grab me or nothing. He's nice. (scared when younger?) No, he just set me on the right track.	Describes father's fear tactics as effective means of control.Contradicts himself in relation to father who shakes him but doesn't grab him. Justifies and minimizes father's behavior.	External locus of control Protecting father Fear of father

7.	They (parents) just don't like their (friends') appearance. Like anybody she (mom) sees with long hair she'll think they're like stoners or something...that's my mother...she's never met him (friend)..."I don't want you hanging around with him."My dad met him and thought he was really nice.	Corrects statement which implicates father. Frustrated with maternal judgement of peers based on external criteria. Feels discounted as his own choice of friends is devalued.	Protective of father External criteria as a measure of worth Feeling discounted
8.	I think my mother's too strict. Like I can never go out usually.	Feels over controlled by mother.	Disempowerment
9.	I have to be excellent for a week, then I've got to warn her another week in advance before I can go out. It's never, like, on the spur of the moment.	Frustrated with standard of excellence within the home and rigid, scheduled life-style	Feeling set up for failure Disempowerment
10.	"Can I go out?" and he'll (dad will) "Yeah, sure," but my mother, "No you should have told me a week in advance."	Idealizes father as supportive. Frustrated with maternal rigidity.	Idealizes father Disempowerment
11.	So I can never have spur of the moment friends over or anything.	Resents that mother restrict his contact with peers.	Isolation Resentment of maternal control
12.	I just sit at home and do nothing, like I usually do.	Feels lonely and apathetic.	Loneliness
13.	I need to do all my chores all the time, the wash and the back landing, my bathroom clean, my bedroom clean and I have to be acting good....like during the week if I was bad, got into a fight with my brother; not a punching fight, but a verbal fight...like calling stupid and stuff...she won't let me go.	Feels frustrated by inability to meet high parental standards. Has to perform well to be regarded as a good person.	feeling set-up for failure. Disempowerment Self worth determined by performance
14.	...when I compare myself to anybody else that I know of, anybody else, I've got good school grades.	Uses external criteria to measure worth. Feels his mother should give him more credit. (see #13)	External criteria as measure of worth Lack of validation
15.	(new problem with mom?) No thats always been like that. (emphasis on 'always').	Indicates that problems with mother are ongoing. Contradicts earlier statement about mother as perfect.(see #1).	Ongoing sense of being controlled Protecting mother
16.	She like chose my friends for me. She'd choose what I'd wear and stuff to school.	Feels personally violated as mother chooses his friends and his clothes.	Resentment of maternal control Disempowerment

17	Like when I knew that everybody was wearing jeans and stuff, I'd be wearing sweats. I was, like, out; I wasn't in, like, with everybody else. I've always been that, like, and I didn't like that.	Feels self-conscious and unaccepted by peers.	Feeling like an outsider Resents maternal control
18.	So like in grade seven I started dressing more like the other people and she thinks I'm a follower now. Like she thinks the worst of everything.	Frustrated with maternal criticism of efforts to become more independent.	Lack of validation Parental negative expectations
19.	I never have friends over...I barely ever go to my friend's house anyway. I barely ever see my friends besides at school.	Acknowledges lack of peer contact.	Loneliness and isolation
20.	Well first of all we've got so many kids that she doesn't want anybody extra over and she just doesn't like people over at our house.	Justifies maternal behavior and attitude.	Protecting mother
21.	Usually have to 'warn' her about a week or two in advance(to go visiting).	Sees his own desires as disruptive as mother needs 'warning'	Discounting his own needs
22.	She just wants to see. Well, if I just tell her, "can I go to my friend's house," she'll look back on the week and just say, "well, you did this wrong, this wrong, this wrong. No you can't go." If I warn her in advance, she'll watch everything I do anyway, and then tell me if I can go or not. It gives me more advantage to tell her a week in advance, but it's a disadvantage for me 'cause everybody makes plans at the spur of the moment.	Feels trapped on a set-up for failure. Expects to fail in meeting mother's standards. Feels he can't win.	Expectation of failure. Feeling set up for failure. Disempowerment
23.	(meet standard?) Most often I don't.	Experiences failure.	Experience of failure.
24.	She'd say I'd be allowed to start going out with my friends when I was fourteen; and when I was fourteen, the same thing. When I was fifteen, now she's saying, "wait till you're sixteen."	Craves increase in autonomy as he advances in age as promised by mother. Frustrated by apparent futility of the situation.	Feeling set -up for failure Disempowerment Craving autonomy

25.	I've got to make lunches, keep my bedroom clean, do the wash and then she yells at me cause I'm in school and I can't do the wash.. And she says I don't work at all.	Feels his efforts are unappreciated. Feels set up for failure.	Feeling set-up for failure Lack of validation
26.	She's been angry ever since I turned fifteen. She says it's a rebel stage. She doesn't trust me that much.	Experiences maternal anger which is attributed to his stage of development.	External criteria as measure of worth
27	It (his delinquent action) didn't make me feel upset; it just made me feel good that I knew I wouldn't get caught. Like I'd do stuff (non-sexual) all the time, and I knew I wasn't going to get caught, and I never did.	Enjoys freedom of action without repercussion. Feels empowered when he is not caught in criminal activity.	Desires experience of self-determination. Need for power and control
28.	I got sexually abused by my cousin when I was six. He was younger than me. He got it from one of his friends...like oral sex on me.(statement immediately follows account of delinquency)	Offers premature sexual experience as explanation for delinquent action. Considers younger child to be abuser.	Premature sexual experience. Justification Denial of responsibility
29.	He did it on my brother,too, so I'm scared that my brother might offend like that, cause my brother's been in kind of a rebellious stage.	Perceives brother as in danger of offending due to being in the rebellious stage and having been sexually violated. Individual differences are discounted.	Perception of control as external External criteria as a measure of worth
30	Right away when he (5 yr. old cousin) put his mouth on me, I said, "Quit it." And he never did it again. (Once?)...about four times.	Contradicts self as to his own participation.	Denial of responsibility
31.	I would say it (what led to sex offense) is from my parents being too strict. That's one of them (reasons). I would always say that. Well mainly my mother not my dad.	Blames parental strictness as partially responsible for his sexually offending. Protects father.	Connection of sexual offense with parental strictness Protecting father
32.	I always thought she was a bit too strict.	Tempers previous statement about mother, minimizing her strictness.	Protecting mother
33.	Uh, for a long time whenever I do something bad they kind of, like, insult me, just my mother. Like, " you're so stupid, you got a sixty-two in math and stuff. you're so lazy. You can't do anything right."	Considers average mark in school doing something bad. Feels personally diminished by parental comment .Minimizes parental treatment. Protects father.	Diminished sense of self-worth Protecting father Minimization of parental comment

34.	That stuff really pisses me off whenever she talks about that. Like when she says, "you're so lazy, you can't do anything right," that ticks me off.	Feels anger at maternal criticism.	Anger at being demeaned
35.	(compliments when young?) I'd get some (emphasizes 'some') when I was younger; now I don't get very much.	Desires recognition which was more apparent in his childhood.	Lack of validation Desires recognition
36.	She's a workaholic too, she just cleans around the house day and night. She always paints everything. Whenever there's something a bit wrong, she, like, amplifies it.	Resents mother's perfectionism. Feels he can't meet the standard.	Resentment of mother Feeling set-up for failure
37.	It (failure to meet standard) brought me down and that I can never do anything right.	Feels like a failure.	Feeling like a failure
38.	When I think about it , what my mother says to me, I feel like I'm not good enough...good enough for my standard, but for her I'm lower.	Questions self worth in failing to meet mother's standards.	Questioning self worth
39.	Cadets has always boosted right back up my morale. Over there I've always been, like, one of the best, and that always makes me feel good, so I know I'll always get compliments from there, always be good there.	Seeks validation from outside sources. Feels good when he gets compliments at cadets.	Desire for validation Self worth contingent on performance.
40.	She used to make charts, like that said different things I have to do like read at night, keep my bedroom clean, do my chores, do extra homework and do something extra to please my mother.	Evaluation of self worth contingent on performance and pleasing others.	Self-worth contingent on performance.
41.	...my mother's got the control in the house. Whenever my dad says I did good enough, she might yell at my dad, saying it's not good enough, and my dad's going to be like, okay.	Sees mother as powerful and controlling. Feels a need for father to protect him.	Disempowerment Seeking parental protection
42.	(Dad's response?) It doesn't bother me. Like I think what he does is great...if my dad can't do it perfect she'll yell at him and then they'll have a little argument.	Defends father's lack of support in mutual mistreatment. Minimizes conflict.	Protecting father Minimization of family conflict

43.	When it comes to shoplifting my dad disciplined me pretty good...shakes me, like scares me, yells at me...it works..."Don't do it again!" I don't do it again, 'cause he goes, "next time I'll hit you."	Describes father's fear tactics as effective means of control. Feels intimidated by father.	External locus of control Fear of father
44.	I was happy, 'cause I never used to compare to the outside world, so everything I thought, I thought was normal. Like I never compared, "all my friends get to go out, why can't I," when I was young.	Reflects that happiness in youth was founded on compliance. Perceives restrictive home environment as abnormal.	Family harmony based on compliance
45.	Now when I realize it, I want to go with my friends, and they just can go whenever they want. " Sorry, I won't be able to; my mother won't let me." That's what I always have to say.	Resents unjust restrictions. Desires autonomy and extra-familial social contact.	Anger at control. Isolation Desire for autonomy Desire for social contacts
46.	My parent's will never drive me over to my friends house.	Perceives parents as non-supportive in relation to peer contact.	Resents lack of parental support
47.	(Sexual offence?) Well those boys (victims)...I think they have been sexually abused...weird behavior. When I'd go babysitting they'd be running around without their pants on. "Get your pants back up!" They wouldn't. They were, like brats.	Rationalizes sex offense by implicating victims.	Rationalization of sexual offense.
48.	And I don't know, it was during a stage where hormones were acting up.	Normalizes and rationalizes sexual offense.	Rationalization and normalization of sexually abusive behavior.
49	I just wanted to, like, experiment, just curiosity or something, and they'd always be jumping on me anyway, and my hands would touch sometimes, and then I realized one time...the older pushed the younger one, stuck his finger up the young one's anus and so then he'd come crying to me. "could you hold him down while I do that to him? So I would.	Minimizes offensive behavior. Rationalizes involvement by describing seductive behaviors of three and five year old victims.	Minimization and rationalization of sexual offense.

50	Well, I touched their buttocks and privates and the young one would touch mine, 'cause he'd always , like, sit on my lap and try to stick his hand down. I don't know where he got that from, but he'd just do that.	Admits to sexual touching but shifts responsibility to victims.	Denial of responsibility in sexual offense.
51.	...and the little boy started to cry really loud ....and then I realized, I went home and it hit me. "What am I doing? This is stupid, I could get caught for this, and I'd be, like, in deep trouble."	Lacks empathic response to victims. Fears being caught.	External locus of control
52	When I told them (parents) there was just some touching, that was all, they were relieved.	Minimizes offense.	Minimization of offense
53.	He (dad) was just glad that it wasn't what he thought it was. He was glad that I opened up. I like the way that, when I told him, he just accepted it...he didn't totally spas and hit me, like beat me or nothing.	Feels relieved that his father did not beat him following commission of the offense.Appreciates his father's unconditional acceptance.	Fears parental repercussion Craves unconditional acceptance
54.	My dad did say this...They (victims) used to come over...and one time the younger one pulled down his pants and goes, "look at my dinky."	Feels support in paternal justification of sexual offense.	Paternal justification of offense.
55.	He'd do stuff like that before, so that's what kind of told me that, yeah these kids won't even tell their parents, so it was planned out.	Plans sexual offense believing he won't get caught.	External locus of control
56.	(turned you on?) yeah. (normal to be turned on by a little boy?) Well it depends on the person, too. Like yeah sure you can get excited over seeing two animals mate; people get excited over that. So I think it's quite normal.	Normalizes being sexually aroused by male child..	Normalizes sexual arousal.to male child.
57.	(alcohol in the home?) Oh, never. My dad used to be an alcoholic. He drinks socially now and then. (drunk?) Rarely ever.	Protects father regarding alcohol use.(see # 74)	Protecting father
58.	Sometimes when he's in a bad mood he seems really mad, but he isn't.	Denial of anger response in father.	Protecting father

59.	He'd start yelling, he'd, like, shake my brother. My brother's really skinny so he'd hurt him, and then he'd smack him across the head or something; not hard, but just smack him, just enough to scare, and my brother cried; then my brother smartened up.	Minimizes father's punishment. Perceives external control as effective.	Protecting father External locus of control
60.	'cause my brother's been really bad...just like me almost 'cause he follows me a lot. He chose the wrong friends...He's not trying hard enough. He's always dirty; everyday after school he has to put his clothes in the wash 'cause he gets dirty.	Measures worth on superficial appearance and actions. Perceives self as a bad influence on brother..	Perception of self as bad.
61.	(friends?) I've got two. I just hang around with everybody. They're not really close yet; I just know them from this year.	Describes superficial relationship with peers.	Lacks close emotional ties with peers
62.	(I) had a really bad reputation. The teachers didn't like me.	Feels like a bad person who is disliked.	Perception of self as bad.
63.	It (offense) felt like a power trip, exactly. It was like, "You can't do nothing about it. I'm in charge here. I'm the one watching you guys, so I can do, like whatever I want. You guys just have to do what I say."	Feels powerful when committing offense. Likes the feeling.	Need for power and control
64	If one day they (victims) wouldn't think about it (sexual activity) I wouldn't think about it.	Transfers blame to victims	Denial and rationalization
65.	(after offense) I felt ashamed of what I did. It bugged me for so long and then when I got caught by the cops, oh did I ever feel like a mole, like really small. I was, like, depressed; I was not very happy.	Feeling of power is replaced by a sense of worthlessness following offense.	Sense of worthlessness following offense Depression
66.	Like somebody got a power trip over me...and then you have to gain it back; it's just something your body wants to do.	Describes a feeling of disempowerment and compensatory action that is bodily felt.	Disempowerment Need for power and control that is bodily felt
67.	(depressed?) No, not really. I felt sad when my parents tell me I can't do nothing right. But never depressed like I was there.	Sadness accompanies parental put-downs and is amplified by his offensive behavior.	Sadness related to parental treatment Depression Diminished sense of self-worth

68.	Like, there whenever I'd pass by their house, I'd get like flashbacks. They would really tick me off....Get me mad. Like, oh what the heck! I'd get mad at myself.	Feels angry at self when reminded of offense.	Self directed anger
69.	I'd be nervous around girls. I would think, "What if I do it again?" I wasn't sure of myself of not doing it again. So I'd stay away from girls.	Fears repeated offensive behavior. Withdraws from female contact.	Fear of loss of control Isolation Withdrawal
70.	(fear with boys?) No. Boys, I'd never hang around with little five-year-old kids, 'cause as soon as my parents found out, I'd quit babysitting. And anyway, that year I went to Vancouver for army-cadet camp. The youngest kids there are twelve.	Seeks control from others and external circumstances.	External locus of control
71.	Sometimes my dad will say, "you can't do anything right", but not half as many times as my mom does.	Acknowledges being diminished by father as well as by mother, contradicting earlier statement.(see #33)	Lack of validation Protecting father
72.	(Desired changes in dad?) Just to control his temper a bit. He gets mad pretty easy so you've got to be more responsible around him. He just gets angry over small things sometimes...	Fear unpredictable nature of father's anger. Perceives self as more responsible when controlled by father. Contradicts earlier statement of father.(see # 2)	Fear of father Ambivalence toward father External locus of control
73.	Sometimes he doesn't give me the chance to explain why some things I've done.	Feels he is not heard by his father.	Feeling discounted
74.	(other problems?) Nothing much, besides his drinking. Like you can hear him open the first beer, you can see him open the second, third fourth. He gets mad (when drunk) but when he has a hangover he's really calm. I like that. I could get away with anything: "Dad, can I go out?" "Yeah."	Fears father's anger when drinking. Assesses father's mood and proceeds accordingly.Contradicts earlier statement regarding father's use of alcohol. (see #57)	Anxiety in relation to father's anger Protecting father
75	He can get mad quite often. It's something I've done but it gets him more mad.	Describes paternal anger response as inappropriate contradicting earlier statement (see #2)	Fear of father Ambivalence related to father Protecting father

76.	Well, at first I was thinking, "I'm such a bad person and everything." I used to think like that. "Why did I do that? I'm so stupid. I must be, like, going crazy or something doing something like that (offense)."	Feels a diminished sense of self-worth after offense. Questions his mental state.	Diminished sense of self-worth Lacks confidence in emotional self.
77.	I'm not like a dirty person.	Feels dirty after commission of offense.	Diminished sense of self-worth
78.	I think I was feeling down a bit. I was, like, I wasn't happy as I could be. I've been having problems with my parents so that always brings me down a bit, and that's probably some stuff that led to what happened.	Relates problems with parents to his state of unhappiness. Makes a connection between this and his offence.	Sadness in relation to parental treatment Unhappiness prior to offense
79.	(when sad?) Uh, well, I'm still, like really bored, really lazy. I want to find some fun, something to do.	Feels lazy and bored when depressed. Seeks escape.through activities that are fun.	Depression Seeks escape through distraction
80	I was very popular, like I am this year, but I just don't hang around with the wrong crowd. Like when I met these guys 'cause they seemed really nice to me, so I hung around them, whenever they'd do something bad, I would do it with them.	Is easily lead by others.	External locus of control
81.	That's just for in school; I was just, like, a good social life in school. Out of school I could never go anywhere. Nothing (happening). I could never go out or anything. ...besides in the back yard.	Resents being isolated from peers; blames restrictive home environment.	Loneliness and isolation Resentment of control Disempowerment
82.	My friends never came over... I understand it now...first of all, there's lots of kids (siblings), so my mother doesn't like having somebody else over.	Feels isolated. Rationalizes not being allowed to have friends over.	Isolation Protecting mother
83.	She gets mad too fast; she's too strict.	Dislikes mother's rules and unpredictable anger.	Lack of predictability Disempowerment
84.	I've always been restricted. My parents have always been stricter, so I could never go out as much as everybody else could.	Feels cheated and restricted.	Disempowerment Resents restrictive environment

85.	Even all these years, I've never had, like a big birthday party with friends that I actually wanted to invite. It's her that , invites the neighbors and my cousins. It's usually family members and other people that come. I've always tried to, like, fight for a birthday party. I've always wanted a birthday party. I still haven't had a birthday party for me.	Feels unheard in relation to wanting a birthday party of his own. All decisions are made for him.Desires recognition as an individual.	Feeling discounted. Disempowerment Craving recognition
86.	My dad defends me: so does my mom sometimes. Like when my dad gets mad at me, my mom's there to defend me. So they both have a good relationship together; they seem to go good together.	Perceives parental conflict, related to his own protection, as complimentary.	Need for protection
87.	And he's so big that he doesn't want to hit me anyway. Like when I was young he used to spank me but he never hit me hard because if he hit me hard I'd have broken bones. That's what I'm going to start doing, body building.	Intimidated by father's size and strength. Wants to be powerful like his dad.	Fears parental repercussion Idealizes father
88.	Oh yeah (relationship with parents is improving) now it is; oh I hope so, I hope it is. I hope it's not just a little spurt that it goes back like it was before; I hope not.	Desires close relationship with parents.	Desire for emotional closeness
89.	Now I'm happy, If I do this I get that, so I'm actually trying to get it harder.	Feels happy and tries harder when success is possible.	Happiness contingent upon set up for success.
90.	But if she starts looking for the nitty gritty now, and if it goes back like it was before, I'm not going to be as happy.	Feels unhappy when standards make success impossible.	Sadness related to parental treatment
91.	(Unhappy before?) yeah. I'd often get mad. I was mad, eh. I wasn't, like, happy or nothing.	Feels unhappy in restrictive environment. Equates unhappiness to anger.	Sadness in restrictive environment. Confusion of sadness and anger

92.	She goes and takes away a privilege that I've asked for, that I think I've worked hard at and she says I didn't do good, so obviously that brings me down and then I don't want to work because I'll know she'll take away my next privilege too 'cause it's been going on for so long...that even if I try hard, she'll say it's not good enough, so I was lazy, and then she'll yell at me, I'd yell at her back.	Feels frustrated in a 'no-win' situation. Directs anger and resentment at mother.	Feeling set up for failure Anger at parental treatment
93.	(before) I'd listen and I'd do what I was supposed to do. Now I was getting to the rebellious stage. I wanted to go out.	Perceives his lack of compliance as a condition of his stage in life. Considers his right to socialize as rebellious.	External locus of control Discounting his own needs
94	(warmth, hugging?) Oh it's very busy, so there's usually not very much of that. Before when I was young there was plenty. In the past five years, no, not really.	Desires emotional closeness which existed in his earlier years. Rationalizes lack of affection in the home.	Lack of emotional intimacy with parents Rationalization Desire for emotional closeness
95	He (dad) was going to be charged with sexual abuse, something like that. Well, I was mad. Like I was wondering, "why would somebody want to do that? Dad never did anything." I was sad too, 'cause knowing he was behind bars. It was before (my offense).	Father's charge of sexual abuse prior to his own conviction results in anger at alleged victim and protectiveness of father.	Protecting of father
96.	And supposedly it happened in Montreal sometime when he was drunk or something. And then she decided to press charges, but we all knew it wasn't him. Like obviously, I know my dad good enough to say that he's never tried anything on any of us, to touch us or anything, so I knew, there's no way it could be him.	Protects father's innocence related to sexual abuse of a non-relative by indicating that he has not sexually abused family members.	Loyalty to father Personal worth measured on performance.
97.	My parents always seem to put me down. I really don't like it..."You can't do this. You're stupid. You can't do that." Now it really bothered me. Well it brought me down.	Feels offended and belittled by parents.	Diminished sense of self-worth Lack of validation
98.	I'd try to reboost it up with my friends.	Seeks alternate sources of validation.	Seeking validation

99.	I remember, there'd be a lot of kids that bugged me, but I'd just say, "forget them," and I'd always feel happy about myself and just ignore them. I just remember that they'd always laugh at me and laugh 'cause I was smart.	Denies hurt feelings in relation to being teased by peers.	Denial Pain of rejection
100.	I realize I get so mad, like, when my parents really tick me off nowadays, I get really, really mad. I just want to, like, I always had a punching bag in Montreal so I'd go, " I want one of those again." That helps a lot, 'cause it makes me feel like I want to punch into the wall or something...and then I'd be in karate too, so then you'd fight with other people.	Seeks outlets for ongoing anger.	Ongoing anger
101.	They (parents) seemed to be like dictators.	Feels powerless in dictatorial rule within the family.	Disempowerment
102.	I'd get this weird feeling and I'd be like, "what am I feeling?' when I would get angry I'd just go into my bedroom and listen to music and then the next day I'd go stealing or something...thats when I'd get, like my power. When I'd get angry, taken it away; when I'd steal, I'd get it back. And so that made me feel okay, and then I'd go out stealing again. (Anger?) Oh...my parents.	Confused about feelings. Withdraws when angry. Stealing relieves feelings of powerlessness.	Confusion related to feelings of anger Withdrawal Seeking power through delinquent actions
103.	I was feeling like I was being hated by my mother.	Feels mother hates him .	Feeling unloved
104.	And when my dad was going through that thing with crime, he seemed to get mad at me too, so I'd feel like I wasn't being liked by him either.	Feels father doesn't like him.	Feeling unloved
105.	And they were always favoring my older sister 'cause she worked hard, so they always use her as a standard and I'm underneath a bit. "Why can't you be like her?"	Feels a diminished sense of self-worth in being unfavorably compared to his sister.Measures worth by performance.	Lack of validation as an individual External criteria as measure of worth

Table 8
Second Order Thematic Abstractions of Chris's Experience

	Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (75, 94, 99, 103, 104)	**Feels unloved by parents.** Feels hated by mother. Feels father dislikes him, too when he is angry. Experiences teasing by peers.
2.	Sadness and Depression (65, 67, 78, 79, 90, 91)	**Experience of feeling "down" accompanies his own actions and those of others.** Following police involvement in relation to sex offense he feels, "depressed...not very happy." Sadness accompanies parental criticism, "when my parents tell me I can't do anything right." Feels sadness, "I was feeling down a bit...wasn't happy as I could be...problems with my parents...that always brings me down." Becomes inactive when sad, " I'm still really bored, really lazy." Anger at restrictive environment takes away happiness, "I was mad, eh, I wasn't, like happy or nothing."
3	Lack of Self Worth (5, 7, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 53, 60, 62, 65, 67, 73, 76, 77, 85, 93, 99, 105)	**Experience of diminished sense of self worth. Lack of validation.** Feels he is not valued as an individual. Longs for his own birthday party with friends chosen by himself rather than his mother, "I still haven't had a birthday party for me." Experiences failure in not meeting high parental standards. Perceives self as bad, "...my brother's been really bad...just like me almost 'cause he follows me a lot." Feels disliked by teachers, "I had a really bad reputation." Experiences teasing by peers, "they'd always laugh at me and laugh 'cause I was smart." Discounts his own right to autonomy referring to this as rebellious. Experiences a diminished sense of self worth in relation to his sexual offense, "oh did I ever feel like a mole, like really small." Feels discounted as an individual by parents' comparison of him to his sister, "why can't you be like her?"
4.	Experience of Being Demeaned (33, 34, 71, 97)	**Experience of being criticized and belittled.** Feels diminished by parents, "they like insult me...you're so stupid, you're so lazy, you can't do anything right.Emphasizes mother's derogatory statements but admits that father "put me down" as well.

5	External Criteria as a Measure of Worth (3, 7, 13, 14, 26, 29, 39, 40, 60, 96, 105)	**Self Worth is determined by performance and superficial criteria.** Resents that parental judgement of peers is based on superficial appearance. Compares himself favorably to others using grades as a criteria. Indicates mother's lack of trust is founded on his being in a "rebel stage" rather than on his own individual worth. Uses the same criteria on brother. Has to be "acting good' before he can go out. Boosts morale by being one of the best at cadets. Validation contingent on performance at home, "do my chores, do extra homework, do something extra to please my mom." Describes brother as "bad" using superficial criteria, "he chose the wrong friends...he's always dirty. Protects father's innocence in commission of a sexual offense, by indicating that his father has never sexually abused his own children.
6	Uncertainty Related to Feelings (2, 72, 75, 91, 102)	**Experience of confusion related to what he is feeling. Mixed emotions.** Expresses ambivalent feelings related to father who is "scarier" (than mom) but is "always fun." Contradicts himself, describing father as, "always fun, the happy type" and later indicating he wishes his father would control his temper. "He gets mad easy ...angry over small things...he can get mad quite often." Confuses sadness with anger when asked if he was unhappy, "yeah, I'd often get mad." Has difficulty identifying what he is feeling, "I'd get this weird feeling and I'd be like,"what am I feeling?"
7.	Loneliness and Isolation (11, 12, 17, 19, 61, 81, 88, 94, 102)	**Experience of physical and emotional isolation.**Feels lonely and isolated from peers. Resents not being able to have friends over, "I just sit at home and do nothing, like I usually do." Feels like an outsider amongst peers, "When I knew everybody was wearing jeans and stuff, I'd be wearing sweats. I was, like, out. I wasn't, like, in with everybody else. I've always been like that." Acknowledges lack of peer contact, "I barely ever see my friends besides at school. Lacks emotional closeness to peers, "they're not really close yet." Lacks emotional intimacy with parents. Withdraws when angry.
8.	Disempowerment (8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 22, 24, 31, 41, 44, 66, 69, 81, 83, 101)	**Lack of power and control in an environment that disempowers.** Decisions are made for him in relation to peer selection, clothing, activities. Believes his mother is unreasonably strict and controlling, "I've got to warn her a week in advance before I can go out; it's never like, on the spur of the moment. She'll look back on the week and say, well, you did this wrong and this wrong and this wrong, No you can't go." Family harmony is based on compliance. Feels like somebody "got a power trip over me." Describes parents as "dictators." Feels no power within, fearing his ability to control his own actions.

9.	Feeling Set Up For Failure (9, 13, 22, 24, 25, 36, 89, 92)	**Sense of hopelessness in being unable to meet perfectionistic standards.** Has to be "excellent" for a week before he can go out. Feels he can't win as mother will find something wrong. Feels trapped, "if I warn her in advance she'll watch every thing I do. It gives me more advantage to tell her (of coming event) a week in advance but it's a disadvantage for me 'cause everybody makes plans at the spur of the moment. Feels he may never gain autonomy as mother promises to lift restrictions when he is fourteen, then fifteen then sixteen. Feels happy when he is not set-up for failure. Feels his best is not good enough by his mother's standards.
10.	External Locus of Control (3, 4, 5, 6, 29, 43, 51, 53, 55,, 59, 70, 72, 80, 93)	**Control from outside of self.**Perceives "bad" behavior as pre-determined by stage rather than individual differences."I'm in the fifteen year old stage and it's really bad, eh." Ceases theft behavior because the manager of the store "gave me a long lecture and he scared me." Does "bad stuff" under the influence of other people. Father acts as deterrent, "he like scares me out of doing anything bad." Terminates sexual offending based on fear of punishment, "the little boy started to cry really loud...it hit me...I could get caught for this and I'd be in deep trouble." Predetermined that victims were not likely to tell their parents, "so it was planned out." Does not fear he'll re-offend little boys, "'cause as soon as my parents found out, I'd quit babysitting and anyway that year I went to Vancouver to camp. The youngest kids there are twelve."
11.	Crime as a "Power Trip" (5, 27, 63, 66)	**Need for power and control.** Enjoys doing 'bad stuff" (non-sexual crime) because he never gets caught, "it was fun, a power trip." Feels powerful in commission of a sex offense, "You can't do nothing about it. I'm in charge here. You guys just have to do what I say." Need to gain power is bodily felt, "It's just something your body wants to do."
12.	Fear of Parental Response (2, 6, 43, 53, 74, 83, 87)	**Fears parental repercussion.** Unable to anticipate maternal anger, "she gets mad too fast." Fears parental repercussion, relieved that his father didn't beat him after the offense. Experiences anxiety in relation to father's mood when drinking, "like you can hear him open the first beer, see him open the second, third, fourth. He can get mad quite often. It's something I've done but it gets him more mad," Feels intimidated by father, "and he's so big that he doesn't want to hit me anyway. He never hit me hard because if he hit me hard I'd have broken bones."
13	Seeking Parental Protection/ Divided Loyalties (41, 86)	**Feels unsafe and in need of protection.** Believes his parents go good together because, "my dad defends me and so does my mom. Like when my dad gets mad at me, my mom's there to defend me."

14	Self-protection and preservation (1, 2, 6, 7, 20, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 42, 47, 48, 49, 50,52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64, 69, 71, 74, 75, 79, 82, 94, 95, 96, 99)	**Use of defense strategies. Protecting self image and image of parents.** Protects image of mother and father using justification, minimization, rationalization and denial. Participates in repeated early sexual behavior, considering a younger cousin (age 5) to be an abuser, "I said quit it and he never did it again. (It happened) about four times. Minimizes family conflict, "a little argument." Denies anger with father for lack of support, "it doesn't bother me. "Rationalizes involvement in sexual offense describing victims as having "weird" seductive behaviors, "they'd always be sitting on me anyway." Normalizes offensive behavior," it was at a stage when hormones were acting up." Normalizes sexual arousal to male children. Transfers blame to victim. Minimizes offense, " there was just some touching that was all...they (parents) were relieved." Withdraws from female contact fearing loss of control. Rationalizes lack of affection in the family, "oh, it's very busy, so there's usually not very much of that. Defends father when he (father) is charged with sexual offense, becoming angry at alleged victim. Denies feeling hurt by peer rejection, "forget them...ignore them and I'd always feel happy about myself."
15.	Premature sexual experience 28, 30	**Early childhood sexual experience.** Describes experience,"I got sexually abused by my cousin when I was six. He was younger than me...like oral sex on me...about four times."
16.	Anger and resentment (11, 16, 34, 36, 45, 46, 68, 81, 84, 91, 92, 100, 102)	**Resentment of parental control and lack of validation. Anger at self.**Resents scheduled lifestyle believing it limits his contact with peers. Feels unappreciated and unnecessarily restricted. Feels personally violated as mother chooses his friends and his clothes. Feels anger toward mother," that stuff really pisses me off whenever...she says, you're so lazy, you can't do anything right, "that ticks me off." Feels mad at himself in relation to his sexual offense. Vents anger at parents by fighting "with other people" in karate and using a punching bag. "I want one of those again. I get so mad when my parents really tick me off nowadays, I get really really mad." Feels angry when his power is taken away. "I'd get this weird feeling." Associates theft behavior with feeling angry and taking power.

17.	Protecting ideal of mother/father (1, 2, 6, 7, 20, 31, 32, 33, 42, 58, 59, 71, 74, 75, 87, 95, 96)	**Defensiveness in relation to parents. Creating a picture that all is as it should be.**Denies that mother has faults describing her as "perfect."; subsequently identifies ongoing problems. Rationalizes not being able to invite friends to his home, "we've got so many kids that she (mother) doesn't want anybody extra." " Minimizes problem with mother, "she's a bit too strict." Defends father, qualifying derogatory statements with pleasantries. Idealizes father, denying problems, "...he seems really mad but he isn't." Minimizes father's scare tactics, "he just shakes me, oh, scared, doesn't grab me or nothing.Denies father's abuse of alcohol, later contradicting himself.
18.	Craving recognition and support (24, 27, 35, 39, 45, 53, 80, 85, 88, 94)	**Desire for autonomy of adolescence and affection of childhood.Seeking validation.** Craves increased autonomy as he advances in age, waiting anxiously for maternal recognition. Desires experience of self determination, "it just made me feel good that I knew I wasn't going to get caught." Regrets lack of validation," I used to get some (compliments) when I was younger; now I don't get very much." Seeks recognition at cadets, "I'll always get compliments from there, always be good there." Desires extra-familial social contact, "I want to go with my friends...sorry I won't be able to." Appreciates his father's unconditional acceptance of him at the time of his offense. Desires close relationship with parents, "now it is (improving)...oh I hope so, I hope it is." Craves parental affection which he believes was more apparent in his childhood.

Table 9

Third Order Thematic Abstractions of Chris's Experience

	Essential Experience	Definition
1.	Feeling Unloved and unwanted (1)	Experience of feeling "hated" by mother and "disliked" by father. This different than the feeling he had as a young child.
2.	Sadness and Depression (2)	Experience of feeling "down" which accompanies his own actions in relation to offensive behaviors and the actions of other.
3.	Devaluation of Self (3, 4, 5)	Experience of diminished sense of self worth; feeling like a failure. Feeling discounted as an individual and discounting self. Experience of being belittled by parents. Feeling of little value 'within' as worth is measured by external criteria.
4.	Uncertainty Related to Feelings (6)	A sense of being confused in relation to his feelings, particularly related to his father. Lacking insight into his own emotions.
5.	Loneliness and Isolation (7)	Experience of physical isolation from peers which he believes has been imposed upon him by parental restrictions. Experience of lack of emotional intimacy with others.
6.	Disempowerment (8, 11)	Experience of powerlessness in an environment that demands perfection and compliance. Sense of being unduly restricted. Lack of control from within. Seeking of power and control through delinquent actions; crime as a "power trip."
7.	External Locus of Control (10)	Experience of control as external to self; Control through circumstances and fear of outcome. Perception that behavior is pre-determined by stage in life rather than individual differences.
8.	Feeling Set-up For Failure (9)	Sense of hopelessness in being unable to meet perfectionistic parental standards. His best is not good enough.
9.	Self-protection and preservation (14)	Ongoing use of ego defense mechanisms and protective strategies. Protecting and preserving self-image and image of family members.

10.	Feeling Unsafe in his Environment (12, 13)	Fear of parental repercussion and unpredictable responses, particularly anger. Experience of anxiety in anticipation. Seeking parental protection by the formation of alliances for defense.
11.	Anger and Resentment (16)	Experience of being angry at parental control and demeaning comment. Anger and resentment at perceived violation.
12.	Premature Sexual Experience (15)	Early childhood experience of fellatio with a younger male cousin.
13.	Craving change/Creating change (17, 18)	A strong desire for recognition and support. Experience of wishfulness in protecting the 'ideal' of mother and father; creating a meaningful picture. A desire to regain what has been lost; craving parental affection .

SYNTHESIS OF CHRIS'S EXPERIENCE

Quotations in the following synthesis are taken from Table 7.

Feeling Unloved

Chris experiences a feeling that he is no longer loved. He recalls displays of affection in his younger years perceiving that over the past five years his relationship with his parents has lacked emotional warmth. He states, "I was feeling like I was being hated by my mother." He feels that his father dislikes him as well. He associates parental anger response with not being loved, stating that his father can get mad often and that his mother has been angry with him ever since he turned fifteen.

Sadness and Depression

Sadness, "feeling down" for Chris accompanies ongoing parental criticism and his subsequent inability to measure up to parental standards: "when my parents tell me I can't do anything right, problems with my parents, that always brings me down. I wasn't happy as I could be." He feels angry at his parents in relation to restrictiveness: "I was mad. I wasn't, like, happy or nothing." Depression accompanies thoughts related to his sexual offense though the feelings are more for himself than for his victims.

Devaluation of Self

Chris experiences a diminished sense of his own worth as an individual. He feels like a failure in being unable to meet high parental standards of behavior. He feels unheard by his parents. For example, his ongoing request for a birthday party of his own is ignored; " I still haven't had a birthday party for me." He feels discounted as a unique individual being compared to his similar aged foster sister; "Why can't you be like her." He perceives himself as "bad" suggesting that his brother is following his example. He discounts his own rights, referring to his desire for autonomy as rebellious. Chris experiences temporary periods of being disliked by teachers and being teased by peers. This does not appear to be an ongoing experience for Chris. He feels belittled by parents: "they like insult me. You're so stupid. You're so lazy. You can't do anything right." He experiences little inner worth as his value is judged by performance and other external criteria: "I have to be acting good." His judgements of others, even those closest to him become founded on superficial criteria rather than inner qualities. He perceives behaviors, attitudes and values to be the product of pre-determined stage in life rather than individual differences. Resentment of his mother's use of stage in life as a self- fulfilling prophecy, does not preclude his own adopting of this attitude. Despite good grades, popularity with peers at school and "excellent" performance at cadets, Chris is not quite sure that he is a good and worthy individual. Being caught for a sex offense contributes to an overall feeling of smallness: "oh did I ever feel like a mole, like really small."

Uncertainty Related to Feelings:

An atmosphere of confusion exists for Chris once he makes a shift from a logical to an affective level of relating. He shows little insight into his own feelings at a primary level and experiences difficulty identifying what it is that he is feeling: "I'd get this weird feeling and I'd be, like, what am I feeling." He experiences ambivalence in relation to his father, contradicting himself numerous times during the interviews. He perceives his father as always "a happy-type" yet fears his father who is "scarier" than his mother. He perceives himself as having been set on "the right track" by his father: "(He) scares me out of doing anything bad," yet wishes his father would control his temper. Confusion exists in relation to self and others.

Loneliness and Isolation

Chris feels lonely and isolated from his peer group. Though he enjoys popularity while at school, after hours, "I just sit at home and do nothing, like I usually do." He perceives parental restrictions, mainly imposed by his mother, to be at the route of his isolation: "I never have friends over. I barely ever go to my friend's house. I barely ever see my friends besides at school. She just doesn't like people over at our house." He feels more 'shut-in' than 'shut-out' as he is unable to join his friends: "I could never go out or anything besides in the back yard."

Chris perceives himself as being 'out'; "I wasn't 'in' like everybody else." He holds his mother responsible for this state of affairs indicating that she selected clothing that was not the popular fashion at the time. He describes his relationship with peers as not being "close yet", having new acquaintances once he began highschool. He feels emotionally isolated from his parents missing the intimacy that he indicates existed when he was younger.

Disempowerment

Chris experiences a strong sense of powerlessness in an environment that he perceives as perfectionistic, rigid and restrictive. He feels that compliance is crucial as he tries to earn autonomy by winning parental approval: "I've got to warn her a week in advance before I can go out; it's never on the spur of the moment. She'll look back on the week and say, no you can't go. "Family harmony is founded on compliance and meeting others standards.

Chris feels disempowered as personal decisions are made for him in relation to peer selection, clothing and activities. He refers to his parents as "dictators", feeling he has no voice of his own. He lacks confidence in his own inner strength, fearing that he cannot control his own actions.

Feelings of powerlessness are unhappy for Chris. He attempts to establish power and control. Criminal activities are perceived as "fun" and a "power trip." He feels powerful in commission of a sexual offense, "you (victims) can't do nothing about it. I'm in charge here. You guys just have to do what I say." A sense of powerlessness and a need to re-establish power appears to to be a dominant theme of Chris's experience. He describes his desire for power as a natural, bodily felt need: "like somebody's got a power trip over me and then you have to gain it back; It's just something your body wants to do."

External Locus of Control:

Chris, who experiences a lack of internal strength, seeks external sources to control his thoughts and actions. This theme is closely related to the theme of disempowerment. The extent to which being externally controlled appeared to dominate his discussion, resulted in it's remaining distinct as an essential, component of his experience. He ceases theft behavior because the manager of the store, "gave me a long lecture and he scared me." He perceives scare tactics and fear of repercussion as effective means of control both in relation to himself and to others. In relation to his victims, he lacks empathic response and does not experience an "inner" directive in terms of behaviors. He terminates his abusive treatment of his victims due to a fear of punishment: "The little boy started to cry really loud. It hit me. I could get caught for this and I'd be in deep trouble." He gives no indication that feelings for the victim entered into his deliberation at the time nor did he exhibit any feelings for the victim, retrospectively. Safety, in relation to not re-offending little boys, is founded on external controls: "cause as soon as my parents found out, I'd quit babysitting and anyways that year I went to Vancouver to camp. The youngest kids there are twelve." External circumstances and perceived outcomes direct actions and thoughts. Feelings as directives of action, appear less evident in his experience.

Feeling Set-up For Failure

Helplessness as a disempowered youth turns into a sense of hopelessness for Chris as he feels set up for failure in his environment. He perceives his best as not being good enough. He feels frustrated in being unable to meet perfectionistic standards, having to be "excellent" rather than simply good. He feels trapped in a 'no-win' situation. For example, he states, "If I warn her (about a coming event) in advance she'll watch everything I do. It gives me more of an advantage to tell her a week in advance but it's a disadvantage for me 'cause everybody makes plans at the spur of the moment." He feels happiest when he believes success is possible, otherwise he feels "lazy", believing there is little point to his efforts.

It is hard for Chris to be perfect enough. Sometimes he doesn't bother trying.

Self-Protection and Preservation

Chris attempts to protect his own self image and the image of others (particularly his father) by use of psychological defense mechanisms. He minimizes parental conflict and shortcomings and rationalizes restrictions that he perceives as unreasonable. He is overly defensive of his father. For example he transfers blame on to the alleged victim in relation to his father's charge of sexual abuse against a female minor. He rationalizes a lack of affectionate response in the family: "It's very busy, so there's usually not very much of that."

In relation to his criminal charges, he remains well defended, eight months after conviction. He normalizes his behavior: "It was at a stage when hormones were acting up." He comments that it's "quite normal" to become sexually aroused by little boys; "Like yeah, sure. You can get excited over seeing two animals mate." He transfers blame on to his victims describing them as having "weird" seductive behaviors. He minimizes his involvement: "There was just some touching that was all." He denies the use of more intrusive measures. Chris attempts to present himself and his family in a favorable light.

Feeling Unsafe in His Environment:

Chris fears parental repercussion and unpredictable responses. He indicates that his mother "gets mad too fast" and that his father gets mad "over little things." He remains hypervigilent when his father is consuming alcohol: "You can hear him open the first, see him open the second, third, fourth." He experiences anxiety related to his father's mood changes and tailors his own behavior accordingly. Though he wants to be more like his father, he feels intimidated by his father's size and strength: "He's so big he doesn't want to hit me anyway. If he hit me hard, I'd have broken bones."

Chris experiences divided loyalties within the family unit. He seeks parental protection by the formation of alliances for defense;

"My dad defends me and so does my mom. Like when my dad gets mad at me, my mom's there to defend me." He believes this is a good arrangement. It helps to keep him safe.

Anger and Resentment

Chris feels angry at perceived violation in being restricted, not appreciated as an individual and in relation to demeaning comments directed at him by his parents. He blames his mother for his limited contact with peers and resents her choosing his friends and his clothes: "that stuff really pisses me off." He vents his anger by "fighting with other people" at karate lessons and by using a punching bag. He describes the intensity of his anger: "I get so mad when my parents tick me off now-a-days. I get really really mad." He describes anger as "this weird feeling" which he has when his power is taken away. He associates theft behavior with feeling angry: "I'd just go into my bedroom and the next day I'd go stealing or something. That's when Id get, like, my power back." When asked what the anger is about he replies without hesitation; "Oh, my parents."

Premature Sexual Experience

Chris describes an early childhood experience of fellatio with a younger male cousin. He considers himself to be the victim; "I got sexually abused by my cousin when I was six."

Craving Change/Creating Change:

Chris attempts to create a more acceptable picture of his family life using psychological defense strategies. He refers to his mother as "perfect" and rationalizes her restrictiveness: "We've got so many kids that she doesn't want anybody extra." He minimizes her strictness yet complains bitterly about it. He defends his father, qualifying derogatory statements with pleasantries. He idealizes his father, denying problems: "He seems really mad but he isn't." He wants to start body building so he can be more like his dad. He minimizes his father's scare tactics: " He shakes me, oh scared, but doesn't grab me or nothing." He denies his father's abuse of alcohol, later contradicting himself.

Chris craves what he perceives as lacking in his experience. He desires autonomy as he advances in age, waiting anxiously for maternal recognition. He desires the experience of self-determination: "It made me feel good that I knew I wasn't going to get caught." He seeks recognition at cadets and regrets a lack of parental validation, indicating that he used to get some compliments: "Now I don't get very much." He longs for extra-familial contacts but also desires parental affection and attention. Chris regrets that he receives less affection now than he did in the past. He desires a close relationship with his parents: "Now it is (improving). Oh I hope so. I hope it is."

Summary

A child feels helpless in an environment that disempowers. He feels anger at parental control but complies to avoid negative outcomes. He resents external criteria being used to judge his worth but applies the same criteria to himself and others. He feels little power within, looking to others to control his behavior yet he feels anger when others have power over him. He is unsure of his own worth, experiencing a sense of failure and frustration in being unable to meet high parental standards. His best is not good enough. He feels his successes are not acknowledged. He feels violated when belittled by parents and blames his mother for an experience of isolation from peers. He is angry but he is also protective of family and home, wanting to feel loved like he did when he was younger. It is important for him to present himself in a favorable light. This sometimes helps him fool himself. He relates more comfortably at a rational than emotional level. He lacks empathic responsiveness. He was eroticized early in life in a sexual experience with a younger cousin. He expresses a strong desire for power and control. Crime has become a "power trip." He controls the actions of two young males in order to satisfy his own needs.

INTRODUCTION TO GIZMO

"I think I'm outgoing...nice...umm...I can make friends easy...lots of people look up to me, like, I'm a very popular guy."

Gizmo is a sixteen year old male of average height and build. he presents himself as "with-it" from his capped head to his suede running shoes. Looking and acting "cool" appear to be a priority.

He has been raised as an only child by his mother. His father has been absent from the home since Gizmo was one-year old. Aside from a single meeting with his father when he was six, no contact existed until he was fifteen. Through his own efforts, he located his father, who lives in the same city. He is presently attempting to encourage a relationship with his father, however contact remains limited.

He resides with his mother following seven months at the home of a friend and his family. He terminated attendance at highschool six months prior to being interviewed, as a result of truancy and failing grades. He intends "to make a new start" next year and in the meantime indicates that he is seeking employment to no avail. He is financially supported by his mother who is a professional business woman.

Gizmo has a past history of academic failure (grade 7) though information on file reveals a normal level of intellectual functioning. He has been diagnosed as having an attention-deficit disorder and has a history of behavioral problems dating back to early childhood. He has had extensive contact with psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners. Medication to control hyperactivity was recently terminated by his own choice.

Criminal history includes one conviction of sexual assault (fellatio) at age thirteen on a male minor (age 8). The assault involved verbal threats and use of a weapon to obtain compliance. He was babysitting at the time. In addition, he was convicted of having sexual intercourse with a female one year younger than himself. He admits to prior thefts, physical assaults and use of exogenic substances (principally marijuana) but has no history of arrests related to these violations.

In the context of the interviews, gaining Gizmo's trust and putting him at ease presented as a greater challenge than for the other three participants. He remained somewhat edgy and disliked any comment that could be interpreted as questioning his integrity. Once comfortable he became intensely involved in revealing his life story, which might best be described as a telling 'from the heart'.

Table 10
First Order Thematic Abstractions of Gizmo's Experience

Excerpts From Transcribed Interviews	Paraphrases	Themes
1. The only teacher I really got along with was my gym teacher. He would compliment me so you know I liked him. He made me feel better in my class.	Responds favorably to the one teacher who validates him.	Seeks validation
2. I failed them. (grade 10 subjects). I'd get some of my assignments in but I didn't really try. I failed grade 7.	Experiences past failure. Puts little effort into being successful in the present.	Experience of failure Apathy
3. (present activities?) Nothing much...Sleep. Um, I don't know, I get up, go on the computer, talk to some people on the modem, go out in the evenings, just bum around, I don't know.	Feels bored in aimless lifestyle.	Lacking sense of accomplishment.
4. In grade 7, I had lots of problems...hanging around people, like sixteen, seventeen and getting into trouble, disobeying my mother,.had no respect for her, didn't give a good shit about anything.	Experiences apathy. Describes self as problematic.	Apathy Self as problematic
5. Junior high...I just did terrible. And you know with my relationship with my mother, it was really terrible.	Reflects on poor performance and relationship with mother.	Self as problematic Poor relationship with mother
6. My mom put me in, like a mental ward so that they could do assessments on me and test me and stuff because of my hyperactivity.	Labels self as hyperactive	Labelling self as hyperactive Perception of self as deficient.
7. Didn't like it (mental ward). I felt trapped. I had no friends. If you look at a person the wrong way, you have to go sit on this chair and it was really terrible because I was always sitting in this chair. And then I would have to go to bed early like 5:00 PM and it was just terrible and I hated it.	Resents being placed for treatment. Feels trapped and humiliated by disciplinary measures.	Resentment of control Feeling trapped by disciplinary measure Humiliation

8.	I used to play games with my mom. Like, I used to steal her purse and just say, " You're not getting it back," just for fun and I used to drive her mad, and she'd literally go crazy because of how terrible I was.	Struggles over power with mother. Has negative perception of self as a child.	Power struggle with mother Perception of self as bad
9.	I felt I didn't need her; she was a meany, whatever. I just felt...had no respect for her.	Feels hurt and withdraws from perceived 'mean' parent.	Withdrawal Feels victimized by parent Anger with mother
10.	I remember I had these two baby-sitters, I think this is my earliest memory...one was a redhead and one was a brunette and they used to always strip their clothes ...in front of me and tease me or whatever...I wouldn't call that being molested, but, like it just wasn't right. (age?) 3-4 yrs.. Basically, I kind of enjoyed it, you know. I just thought it was neat.	Enjoys premature sexual exploitation by baby-sitters.	Early childhood sexual exploitation.
11.	Um I remember being really young and stealing money from my mom's purse and going out to the Mall, about 6 or 7 yrs. I always wondered how I knew which bus to take back, because I didn't, but I always made it back home.	Amazed at his own independence in early childhood wondering how he managed.	Lack of safety
12.	I used to fight a lot too when I was a kid, in school, grade 1. At recess time four classmates...they'd all gang up on me and I'd beat them all up at the same time. So I used to fight, like, every day; I was a bully...I would egg it on...I'd still win. It was kind of neat.	Perceives self as a bully. Seeks power from an early age.	Negative self-image Need for power and control Lack of acceptance by others
13.	I used to get the strap, in school, every day in grade 2.	Perceives self as bad/incorrigible.	Perception of self as bad.
14.	That's when my mom took me to Dr.T. And that's when he diagnosed me as Attention Deficit, and that's when I started taking medication and seeing a psychiatrist and stuff.	Identifies diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder.	Perception of self as deficient

15.	And it worked really well because I got new medication and in grade 8 I started getting honors in school. And, you know, I didn't even have to do year-end exams 'cause I was doing so good.	Proud of his success at school. Seeks validation.	Seeking validation
16.	Ever since I got arrested a year ago I've never, I'd never do crime again, still haven't done crime for, like, a year.	Proud of his ability to avoid crime. Seeks validation.	Seeking validation
17.	(What did you need?) A father (quick and definite response)	Needs father figure.	Longing for father
18.	I'm sure my life would be a lot different if I wasn't molested, like abused...the baby-sitter... that I had intercourse with when I was at age...7, 8 and 9 yrs. It was my mother's friend's daughter...I didn't know anything about it until she showed me.and then after that I started getting sexually active at age 12 with girls.	Reflects that experience of being sexually abuse changed his life.	Experience of sexual abuse
19.	(life with mom?) It was up and down, up and down. You know, it was good for a while, then it went bad, then good, then bad, then good, and then bad.	Describes unpredictability of life with mother.	Lack of predictability in environment
20.	I used to get lickings with a metal spatula and I was really small. I don't know if my mom enjoyed it or whatever, but I remember this one time where I got a licking and I was sitting in my room after this licking. My mom called me down again to give me another one. Like she enjoyed it. "Just pull down your pants, bend over again" for no reason whatsoever.	Feels unloved by mother, believing that she enjoys hurting him. Resents being victimized.	Feeling unloved Resentment of victimization Experience of physical abuse
21.	I felt that she really hated me and now I look at it and I think she enjoyed actually hitting me with this spatula.	Feels hated by mother whom he believes enjoyed punishing him.	Feeling unloved Feeling victimized by mother
22.	I felt, you know, abused, like taken advantage of cause I was helpless, you know, and I couldn't do anything about it.	Feels abused by one more powerful. Feels sadness in recall of helpless child.	Feeling victimized by parent Helplessness Lack of safety

23.	I was just small and weak and couldn't do anything about it.	Feels helpless and indefensible.	Lack of safety Helplessness
24.	(Mom show love?) No, I don't think so.	Feels unloved	Feeling unloved Emotional deprivation
25.	Like , not compared to normal families, like, you know. I never did anything with my mom. Yeah (I wanted to)	Longs for normal family. Regrets lack of time with mother.	Longing for mother/family Loneliness Feeling unimportant
26.	(Mom busy doing) Nothing! (emphatic response)	Resentment and anger at mother's lack of attentiveness.	Anger with mother Feeling discounted
27.	(Alone a lot?) Yeah.	Feels lonely	Loneliness and Isolation
28.	Just once in a while she would hug me, I think, give me a kiss or whatever, but not hold me or anything like that.	Longs for maternal affection that has been missed.	Emotional deprivation Longing for affection Feeling unloved
29.	I remember going and visiting him (father) when I was 6. I really enjoyed it 'cause I got to meet my twin sisters and other members of the family, you know, his new family and I enjoyed it.	Longs to be part of his father's new family.	Longing for father/family Feeling like an outsider Longing for acceptance
30.	He bought me a GI Joe, you know. I really liked it or whatever and I remember his wife baked me cupcakes and stuff like that...and when I was leaving he said, "well, what do you want for Christmas?" and he goes "Okay, yeah", and then I never talked to him ever since.	Feels deep hurt at paternal rejection after special treatment during a visit with him. Profound disappointment	Deep hurt at paternal rejection Unrealized hopes Pain of loss
31.	He never sent me a card, nothing and I haven't talked to him ever since except for this year. I felt hurt. I thought he didn't want me, he didn't care.	Feels deep hurt at paternal rejection. Feels unloved and unwanted. Anger and disappointment.	Feeling unloved and unwanted Pain of rejection Sense of indignation
32.	I didn't really think about him...but I always wondered why, why he never replied or anything.	Attempts to suppress thoughts about father but is bothered by unanswered questions.	Suppression of painful thoughts Seeking answers
33.	My mom would tell me that he was an asshole, a jerk, he'd lie or whatever, and I started to believe it, you know. Anger...I was mad that he didn't keep his word or didn't even at least send me a card or anything.	Feels angry with father. Bonds with mother in mutual negative affect.	Anger and resentment toward father Confusion about father

34.	It seemed after a while that every time my mom would get a boyfriend, get close to him and then they'd just leave because of whatever went on between my mom and him. I didn't know, you know; was too young to understand, really, but you now I was really hurt when they would be gone.	Feels deep pain in loss of male role models. Feels helpless in losses.	Longing for father figure Pain of loss Helplessness
35.	And then eventually I stopped and I didn't really get close to them.	Withdraws affection fearing closeness.	Withdrawal of affection Fear of emotional closeness Expectation of negative outcome
36.	(hopes?) Definitely (emphatic response). I always hoped that I would have a father to, like, do stuff with me and play catch...	Experiences profound disappointment as hopes for a father do not materialize.Feels he's missed out.	Profound disappointment Sense of regret in loss of opportunity Longing for father
37.	A lady I lived with works at the hospital and she got the hospital records on him (father) and she gave me his address and phone number. I called him up; just about gave him a heart attack.	Longing for father persists. Takes initiative to locate him.	Longing for father
38.	Just called him up and said, "this is Gizmo. Do you remember me?"...and then we talked for a bit and then we met. It was okay. Like it seemed good because he seemed confident about keeping a relationship...that he wanted to keep it this time..	Desires relationship with father. Risks rejection.	Longing for father Desire for emotional closeness
39.	(felt) better but I didn't let my guard down and I still haven't, you know because there's still that thought in my head that he's just going to take off again.	Fears rejection and abandonment.	Fear of abandonment/rejection Fear of emotional closeness Expectation of negative outcome
40.	I was just as ignorant as him....who's going to call who?	Absorbs responsibility for lack of contact, giving dad the benefit of the doubt.	Longing for father Denial
41.	I don't know, in the last few weeks he made plans to see me three times already, but he's never kept up to them. He says it's because of his work. He says he's always working. My mom tells me he's lying but I don't know...I look forward to seeing him.	Feels pain of rejection. Confusion about father's intent. Maintains hope.	Pain of rejection Confusion of affect Longing for father Profound disappointment

42.	I said, "Heck, you know, I'm getting tired, I'm getting tired of having my hopes up seeing you and then not seeing you because of your stupid work or whatever...I'm teed off", and you know, hung up the phone because there's an answering machine, eh.	Pain of rejection and disappointment. Anger at father for discounting his needs.	Pain of rejection Anger with father Feeling unloved
43.	I got thoughts that maybe he just doesn't want to see me.but I got thoughts that maybe he does and he's really telling the truth.	Feels confused about father's intent. Rationalizes father's lack of involvement.	Longing for father Confusion of affect Agony of not knowing Rationalization
44.	I don't know...I don't know, I really don't think about it that much at all. Like it doesn't bother me 'cause you know, it's not like-I don't know, it's just, whatever. (see 43.)	Denies that father's disinterest bothers him. Feels powerless to affect outcome. Will take what comes.	Denial of painful thoughts Powerlessness Apathy Agony of not knowing
45.	She (mother) went to school for three years and during those three years I was alone, like lot of the time...she was just busy, like 24 hours. I never got to do anything with her for, like 3 years...and that's a period of time when I didn't enjoy it.	Feels lonely and neglected by mother at a time when he needed her.Sense that time has been lost.	Loneliness Feeling neglected Longing for mother Pain of loss
46.	And I got really close to my baby-sitter. She was nice, she was caring. I cried when I left her, like when I stopped going to her, because I was really close to her.	Longs for nurturing from mother. Feels pain of separation.	Longing for mother Pain of separation
47.	She would spend a night at his (boyfriends's) house and leave me home alone, like all night, so I'd be home alone...(feeling) neglected.	Feels lonely and unsafe. Resents mother's neglect.	Loneliness Lack of safety Resentment of neglect
48.	I didn't really think about it much. But, you know, it hit's me now, but at the time it was just whatever...	Reflects on neglect recognizing child-like acceptance and helplessness.	Helplessness Apathy in childhood
49.	I got the car written off and I didn't want to go home; I was too scared...so I just stayed out and was homeless for about two weeks, stayed outside or whatever.	Feels unsafe at home.	Lack of safety at home

50.	I moved in with my friend and his brother and sister and his stepmother and then I lived there for eight months and it was great, I loved it, 'cause the house was busy, always something to do and you're never alone, eh, never alone.	Longs for family. Dislikes being alone.	Longing for family Fear of loneliness
51.	And Jane, the guardian there, I am so close to her right now because I can talk to her about anything and she understand and she cares. Like she loves me as, like, one of her children.	Longs for maternal love Longs for family	Longing for maternal affection Need for acceptance
52.	I'm back home now and things...so far so good. Like it's good; it's not bad; we go out sometimes together and do stuff, you know...	Lacks enthusiasm with regard to relationship with mother.	Lack of emotional closeness to mother Cautious re expectations
53.	Bob (mother's boyfriend) treated me like a son.Like I looked up to him like a father. he was just a big part of my life then and then my mom basically told him to stay away from us and I was pretty well heartbroken for a while.	Feels pain of loss of father figure. Feels powerless to affect outcome.	Pain of loss Powerlessness Longing for father figure
54.	When she (mother) freaked out she'd, like punch me or pick up the nearest weapon or whatever and hit me with it. There was this broken coat hanger and it had, like, real sharp edges on it and she just beat me up once with it and I had bruises all over my body at one time.	Feels anger and sadness in recall of physical abuse.	Experience of physical abuse Anger at mother Feeling victimized Helplessness
55.	My psychiatrist said I deserved it. I still didn't, I still didn't deserve that kind of abuse. My behavior, you know, I drove my mom mad.	Resents non-support of his psychiatrist. Believes he didn't deserve abusive treatment even though his actions were problematic.	Feeling discounted Feeling unlovable Resents adult lack of support Feeling victimized
56.	If she (mother) did something to me I didn't like, I would do something right back at her. I never took it, like; I would never take anything from her. I would always get her back. That's what drove her crazy, 'cause I never gave up.	Resents treatment by mother and reacts in vengeful ways. Takes some control.	Revenge for mistreatment Power struggle with mother

57.	(problems at school?) yeah, a lot. The Attention Deficit Disorder. I couldn't concentrate on anything. I was always yabbing up, you know, just blabbing in class...really hyper, you know....I was born with it...cause my father had it too.	Sees self as innately defective.	Perception of self as innately defective Experience of failure
58.	(thinking about problems at home?) I didn't really care.	Describes apathy in childhood.	Denial Apathy
59.	I don't know...it (learning) is still hard. Like I'm hoping for the new start for the next year.	Uncertain of capabilities.	Lacks confidence in self.
60.	I like my life the way it is so far.(right now). There's nothing really I'd like to change except for my relationship with my father.	Satisfaction with present improvements does not extend to relationship with father.	Longing for father
61.	(sexual offense?) A boy, age 8, performed oral sex on me. He brung it on himself, like, with his father's porno books and stuff. He would ask me if I would like to try certain things, like, pictures, and I was thirteen at the time. Like, this was about three years ago...four years ago. And I wasn't on medication.He wanted to try it (oral sex) and I let him.	Minimizes responsibility by blaming the victim. Rationalizes his involvement in sexual offense.	Denial and Rationalization in relation to offense
62.	I was with a thirteen-year-old girl and we were making out and her mother walked in. ...I got charged. (I was) fifteen. (inappropriate behavior?) ...Well, 'yeah', it was 'not' appropriate (angry at question).	Defensive in relation to admission of wrongdoing.	Defensiveness Lacking confidence in self
63.	(before therapy) my attitude was terrible...very disruptive...I just didn't like it, I didn't like that someone had power over me. (when little) just they (things) happened everyday by day...Whatever came I took, you know. Like I had no power when I was younger	Resents authority. Feels he has no power.	Resentment of authority Disempowerment

64.	I was controlled by adults; I was controlled by doctors, medication. Like, basically they were controlling my life, what I do, what I feel, you know. Since I was 7 years old I was controlled by doctors, parents, teacher...	Resents atmosphere of control. Feels he has no say in his life.	Resentment of authority Disempowerment Feeling discounted
65.	My self-esteem was really low when I was younger. Like I felt that I was shit. I put other students down. I did a lot of things to look for attention. I didn't feel that things were good.	Experiences low self-worth in his childhood.	Low self-worth
66.	No, (people don't listen to me). Well they did in group (therapy). Like I had others listening to me and stuff like that. People looked up to me...	Feels discounted. Enjoys experience of being heard and looked up to.	Feeling discounted Need for validation
67.	(Medication now?) No. I feel better. I feel I have more control of my life, what I do, what I say.	Proud of improvements Feels empowered with termination of medication.	Feels disempowered by medication Desires autonomy
68.	The Attention Deficient' just sort of brung it on, you know? It was a reason for a lot of problems I had also.	Rationalizes problems, transferring the blame to his diagnosis.	Self as deficient. Rationalization
69.	It (childhood) was all confused; It's all confused feelings. I didn't really know what I was feeling most of the time. ((And Now?) I don't know.	Feels confusion and uncertainty in relation to his feelings, past and present.	Confusion/uncertainty

Table 11
Second Order Thematic Abstractions of Gizmo's Experience

	Thematic Clusters	Generalized Descriptions
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (12, 20, 21, 24, 28, 31, 42, 51, 52, 54.)	**Feels unloved and unwanted by parents and peers.**Experiences a lack of peer acceptance. Feels "hated" by mother, believing she enjoys punishing him. Experiences physically abusive treatment by mother. Indicates that mother does not show love or affection. Attaches to mother-figure in a need for affection, "she understands and cares...like, she loves me." Lacks affect in description of relationship with mother, "we go out sometimes together and do stuff," Feels father, "didn't want me, didn't care." Experiences ongoing rejection by father.
2.	Pain of Rejection (12, 30, 31, 39, 41, 42, 43)	**Deeply pained by paternal rejection.** Vivid recall of happy visit with father ends in disappointment at his future lack of contact, "he never sent me a card...nothing...I felt hurt. I thought he didn't want me, he didn't care." Renewed contact with father, 9 years later. leads to a repeat in the pattern of hope then disappointment., "I don't know, in the last few weeks he made plans to see me three times already, but he's never kept them...I look forward to seeing him." Remains cautious not letting his "guard down" because he fears that "he's just going to take off again." Feels tired of having his hopes dashed.
3.	Pain of Loss (30, 34, 36, 45, 46, 53)	**Experience of deep hurt in multiple losses.** Feels pain and disappointment at loss of contact with father. Experiences pain at repeated losses of father figures, "it seemed every time my mom would get a boyfriend...I was really hurt when they'd be gone." Describes himself as "heartbroken." Experiences profound disappointment at loss of his dream for a father, seeing his childhood opportunity vanish, " I always hoped that I would have a father to, like do stuff with me and play catch." Feels hurt and regret at loss of time with his mother when he needed her most, " I never got to do anything with her for, like, 3 years and that's a period of time when I didn't enjoy it. Grieves at separation from a baby-sitter, " I cried when I left her because I was really close to her."

4.	Confusion and Uncertainty (32, 33, 41, 43, 44, 69)	**Experience of 'not knowing'. Confusion in relation to feelings.** Seeks answers in relation to father's lack of involvement. Agonizes as to whether his father wants to see him or not. Attends to father's excuses trying to make sense of them. Becomes more confused when mother's negative comments infringe on his desire to believe in his father. Identifies confusion and uncertainty in relation to feelings, past and present., "It's all confused feelings. I didn't really know what I was feeling most of the time". (And now?) "I don't know."
5.	Diminished Sense of Self Worth (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 55, 57, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 68)	**Sense of diminished self-worth.Perception of self as deficient/bad.**Seeks validation from others. Experiences repeated failure in school, " I just did terrible", and in relationships, " It (relationship with mother) was terrible." Experiences boredom in unproductive life style. Perceives self as bad describing problematic behaviors, "getting into trouble, disobeying my mother." Perceives self as defective, using labels of hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder which he claims to have been born with and inherited from his father. Feels humiliated by punishment on the "mental ward". Is singled out for bad behavior at school, " I used to get the strap in school everyday in grade 2." Feels unimportant as mom chooses to do "nothing" rather than spend time with him. Feels unworthy of good treatment, " my behavior, you know, I drove my mom mad." Lacks confidence in himself, hoping for a new start, " I don't know." Reacts defensively when confronted. Feels discounted and unheard by others. Experiences low sense of worth, "like I felt like I was shit."
6.	Resentment and Anger (7, 9, 20, 21, 22, 26, 31, 33, 42,45, 47, 54, 55, 56, 62, 63, 64)	**Pain turns to anger in the realization of neglect and personal violation.** Describes mom as a "meany," withdrawing and treating her with disrespect. Resents mother's lack of attentiveness and father's rejection. Believes mother's description of father as, "a jerk and asshole." Vents anger at father's answering machine, referring to his excuses as, "your stupid work or whatever." Feels neglected by mother over long periods of time and resents being left alone, "like all night." Angry at psychiatrist who suggests he deserves harsh maternal treatment. Takes revenge against mother," I would always get her back." Resents adult authority and attempts at control, "like basically they were controlling my life, what I do, what I feel."

7.	Lack of Power and Control (7, 22, 23, 34, 44, 48, 53, 54, 63, 64, 67)	**Feeling helpless in an environment that disempowers.** Feels trapped by control and hates disciplinary measures on the mental ward. Feels helpless as a victim of physical abuse, "I was small and weak and couldn't do anything about it." Has no power to prevent the pain of loss in relation to father figures, "mom would get a boyfriend, get close to him and then they'd just leave because of whatever went on between my mom and him...too young to understand. He (mother's boyfriend) was a big part of my life and then my mom basically told him to stay away from us." Feels powerless in attempts to initiate a relationship with his father. Dislikes authority. "I didn't like that someone had power over me. whatever came I took, you know. Like I had no power when I was younger. I was controlled by doctors, medication. They were controlling my life, what I do, what I feel. since I was 7 years old I was controlled by doctors, parents, teachers.
8.	Taking power and control (8, 12, 42, 56, 67)	**Taking back some power.** Struggles with mother over power, "I used to steal her purse and just say, you're not getting it back." Gets back at mother, " I would always get her back I never gave up." Enjoys "winning" over peers in fights. Expresses anger to father over neglect. Feels empowered with termination of medication, " I feel better. I feel I have more control of my life."
9.	Expectation of negative outcome (30, 34, 35, 39, 41, 52, 58)	**Lacks faith that good things will happen.** Hopes are unrealized as father's promises for involvement do not materialize, "he never sent me a card, nothing and I haven't talked to him ever since except for this year." Initiates contact with father but remains guarded."I didn't let my guard down and I still haven't." Fears father might "take off again." Profoundly disappointed that his ongoing wish for a father does not materialize. Becomes attached to mother's boyfriends, experiencing pain of loss as they leave the relationship. Remains more distant in the future expecting a repeat of the painful pattern. Is cautious with regard to expectations of a better relationship with mother, "so far so good."
10.	Experience of apathy (2, 4, 44, 48, 58)	**Sense of futility and hopelessness. Attitude that there is little point to the effort.** Fails grade 10 subjects, "but I didn't try...I failed grade 7. States that in grade 7, "I didn't give a good shit about anything." Deliberates as to father's intent. Will take what comes."I don't know, it's just whatever." recognizes apathetic attitude in his past related to mother leaving him alone all night, "It hits me now, but at the time it was just...whatever." Indicates that with regard to problems at home, "I didn't really care." "

11.	Loneliness and Isolation (5, 12, 25, 27, 29, 38, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52)	**Experience of physical and emotional isolation.** Feels like an outsider as classmates "gang up" on him. Describes relationship with mother as "terrible." Expresses a desire to spend time with mother adding that, "I never did anything with mom." feels lonely and neglected by mother at a time when he needed her. Spends a great deal of time alone. Longs to be part of his father's new family. Recalls that mother would spend time with her boyfriend "and leave me home alone, like all night, so I'd be home alone." Fears being alone, cherishing the time spent at his friend's house, "cause the house was busy...and you're never alone, eh, never alone. Longs for acceptance and belonging, "she (friend's mother) loves me as, like, one of her children.Experiences emotional isolation, indicating mother doesn't show love. Values friend's mother because he can talk to her about anything.Lacks enthusiasm and expression of feelings in describing relationship with mother. Pursues relationship with his father despite repeated disappointments in a desire for emotional closeness, "like it seemed so good because he seemed confident about keeping a relationship...that he wanted to keep it this time.
12.	Experience of sexual exploitation (10, 18)	**Early childhood experience of sexual violation.** Enjoys premature sexual exploitation by baby-sitters when he was 3-4 years of age. Engages in intercourse from age 7-9 years with a baby-sitter who is the daughter of his mother's friend. Believes this experience contributed to his sexually active behavior at age 12 and that it changed his life.
13.	Experience of physical abuse (20, 22, 54)	**Experience of excessive punitive measures taken by parent.** Describes repeated lickings with a metal spatula, "just pull down your pants, bend over, for no reason whatsoever." Felt "abused...like, taken advantage of 'cause I was helpless." Recalls that when his mother "freaked out she'd like punch me or pick up the nearest weapon and hit me with it." Indicates his mother beat him with a broken coat hanger "with real sharp edges" on it. "I had bruises all over my body at one time." Sadness and anger accompanies his disclosure.
14.	Lack of Safety (10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 47, 49, 54)	**A sense of being vulnerable and unsafe in his environment.** Experiences sexual exploitation and physical abuse. Feels exploited when he was, "helpless, small and weak." Wonders how he made it home safely after going out to the mall alone at age 6 years. Feels unsafe when left home alone at night. Lacks security in unpredictable relationship with mother, It was up and down...then good, then bad, then good, then bad.Stayed out and was homeless for two weeks after he demolished his mother's car, "I was too scared...I didn't want to go home."

15.	Self Protection and Preservation (9, 32, 35, 39, 40, 43, 44, 58, 61, 62, 68)	**Ongoing use of defensive strategies.** Withdraws from perceived mean parent telling himself that he doesn't need her. attempts to suppress thoughts of his father. Withdraws affection from mother's boyfriends following repeated losses. approaches relationship to father with caution fearing that "he's just going to take off again." Attempts to preserve hope of father's love by absorbing blame in relation to paternal neglect. Tries to rationalize father's excuses. Denies existence of pain related to paternal rejection, "like it doesn't bother me." Indicates that he didn't really care that problems existed within his home. Rationalizes and minimizes his involvement in sexual offenses to preserve sense of self worth, "he (8 yr. old victim) brung it on himself, he wanted to try it and I let him." Responds defensively during interview. Transfers responsibility to diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder offering this as a rationalization for problems in his life.
16.	Sense of Longing (17, 25, 28, 29, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41,43, 45, 46, 50, 51, 53, 60)	**Longing for what has been missed.** A young child's longing for father persists in adolescence. Recalls, in detail, a visit with his father and step-siblings, longing to be part of his father's new family. Longs for father-figure. Befriends mother's boyfriends and feels pain when they leave. "I always hoped that I would have a father to like, do stuff with me and play catch. Takes initiative to locate his father and risks rejection, after many years of absence. Use of rationalization and denial to salvage possibility of relationship with father. Experiences repeated disappointment but persists in his effort to maintain contact. Longs for maternal attention and ideal of "normal" family. Loves being part of his friend's family longing for maternal affection and family,"I am close to her (friend's mother) right now...like she loves me as like one of her children." Longs for lost time with mother. Attaches to mother figure, "I got really close to my baby-sitter," Longs for emotional intimacy, noting that mother rarely held him or showed love.

Table 12

Third Order Thematic Abstractions of Gizmo's Experience

	Essential Experience	Definition
1.	Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (1, 2)	Experience of feeling unloved by mother and unwanted by peers. Ongoing sense that his father does not want him in his life.
2.	Experience of Pain and Disappointment (2, 3)	Perpetuation of pain of rejection in repeated attempts to maintain contact with father. Profound disappointment in others as hopes are unrealized in relation to father-figures. Feeling "heartbroken" at losses. Disappointment and regret over what could have been.
3.	Confusion and Uncertainty (4)	Experience of inner turmoil in a weighing of dichotomous possibilities related to father's feelings and intentions. Confusion related to his own feelings, past and present.
4.	Diminished Sense of Self-Worth (5)	Perception of self as deficient/bad. Feeling unimportant, unheard by others and unworthy of good treatment. Experience of failure at school.
5.	Anger and Resentment (6)	Anger and resentment at perceived neglect and violation of self. Anger directed at mother, father, mental health officials and adult authority in general.
6.	Disempowerment (7, 8, 13)	Experience of feeling trapped by control of others (parents, teachers, doctors). Feeling powerless to influence the unfolding of painful life events. Sense of helplessness as a victim of physical mistreatment. Struggle to regain power in vengeful behaviors towards mother and by overpowering others.
7.	Loneliness and Isolation (11)	Experience of physical and emotional isolation and loneliness predominantly in relation to parents. Perception that isolation is 'other-imposed'. Experience of emotional deprivation within the home.

8.	Experience of Futility in a Lack of Good Faith (9, 10)	Lacking faith that good things will happen, expecting old patterns to repeat themselves. Fear of loss and expectation of disappointment. Sense of hopelessness. Attitude that there is little point to the effort. Apathetic acceptance of perceived unchangeable circumstances.
9.	Feeling Unsafe In His Environment (13, 14)	A sense of being vulnerable and unsafe in his environment. Fear of maternal admonishment. Experience of being physically abused.and sexually exploited. Lack of security in unpredictable nature of parent-child relationship. Fear of being alone.
10.	Self Protection and Preservation (15)	Ongoing use of ego defense mechanisms and strategies to preserve image of self and protect others.
11.	Experience of Sexual Exploitation (12)	Early childhood experience of sexual violation by female babysitters. Reported early involvement in voyeuristic activities and sexual intercourse.
12.	Experience of Physical Abuse (13)	Perception that he was victimized by his mother in an excessive use of physical punishment. Experience of bodily injury imposed by mother.
13.	Sense of Longing (16)	Experience of intense desire to make things 'right' in his life; to fill the gap. Longing for father, mother and lost childhood opportunity.

SYNTHESIS OF GIZMO'S EXPERIENCE

Quotations in the following synthesis are taken from Table 10.

Feeling Unloved and Unwanted

Gizmo feels unwanted by peers and unloved by his mother and father. He experiences excessive punitive measures by his mother believing that she enjoys hurting him: "I felt that she really hated me." He recalls little show of affection, indicating that he was rarely held by his mother. He exhibits minimal affect in descriptions of his relationship with her.

Pain of rejection by his father contributes significantly to a sense that he is unloved. Vivid recollections of a pleasant visit with his father are spoiled by broken promises: "He never sent me a card, nothing and I haven't talked to him ever since... I thought he didn't want me, didn't care." He fails to hear from his father for nine years. His own efforts result in a reunion with his father but he remains unsure that he is wanted: "I don't know. In the last few weeks he made plans to se me three times. He never kept up to them. I got thoughts that maybe he doesn't want to see me."

Experience of Pain and Disappointment

Pain of early childhood rejection by his father is perpetuated in the present as he experiences profound disappointment at father's lack of enthusiasm toward him. He persists in his hope for a relationship encountering ongoing disappointment: "I'm tired of having my hopes up."

Multiple losses of father figures contribute to deep emotional hurt as he feels "heartbroken" as mother's male companions leave. Loss of the dream for a father contributes to his pain. He grieves the loss of a baby-sitter because, "I was really close to her." Reflections on early childhood result in sadness as he regrets time lost with his mother: time when he wanted and needed her attention.

Confusion and Uncertainty

Gizmo seeks answers, weighing dichotomous possibilities in relation to whether he is loved or not by his father. He attends, carefully to his father's explanations, wanting to believe them but he carefully considers his mother's more skeptical view point. The result is inner turmoil and confusion. He is confused in relation to his feelings, past and present; "It's all confused feelings. I didn't really know what I was feeling most of the time." (And now?)
"I don't know."

Diminished Sense of Self Worth

Gizmo's experience of repeated failure at school and being reprimanded for "bad" behaviors contributes to a sense of worthlessness: " I used to get the strap everyday in grade two." He experiences humiliation in being singled out. Gizmo perceives himself as both "bad" and defective, repeatedly labelling himself as attention deficit disordered and hyperactive. He credits prescribed medications for his subsequent achievements in school. He perceives deficiencies as innate, claiming to have been born with the problems. In the context of physical punishment by his mother he perceives himself as unworthy of good treatment: " My behavior, you know, I drove her mad." He feels that psychiatrists supported this view. He experiences a feeling of being discounted and unheard by others. In a perception that his mother was busy doing "nothing" yet had no time for him, he feels unimportant in his mother's life. He hopes for a new start at school but lacks confidence in his own abilities. Gizmo summarizes his feelings about himself: "My self esteem was really low when I was younger. Like, I felt that I was shit." Gizmo, the teenager is still not confident.

Resentment and Anger

An experience of pain turns to anger in the realization of neglect and personal violation. Anger is directed at his mother and father. He feels resentment in relation to perceived physical and emotional abuse considering mother to be a "meany". He feels neglected and ignored. He resents his mother's lack of time with him and being left alone: "like, all night." Anger at his mother is exemplified in vengeful actions: "if she did something to me, I would always get her back." Resentment is apparent in his perception of being unsupported and controlled by mental health workers. Gizmo vents anger at his father which results from repeated disappointment and pain of rejection. He resents adult authority and is quick to respond angrily if his integrity is questioned or if he perceives others are attempting to exert control.

Disempowerment

Gizmo feels helpless in an environment that disempowers. He repeatedly refers to himself as being "small, weak and helpless" in the context of physical abuse. He feels powerless to influence the unfolding of life's painful events. He watches helpless and "heartbroken" with regard to father-figures who depart due to relationship problems between his mother and her boyfriends. Maintaining a longed for relationship with his own father appears to be outside his control as repeated efforts on his part meet with failure. Gizmo feels "trapped" when under the control of others: "I was controlled by adults, doctors, medication, controlling my life, what I do, what I feel. I had no power. Whatever came I took."

Though he perceives himself as taking whatever comes, he attempts to regain some control. He struggles for power with his mother; "I used to steal her purse and just say, you're not getting it back. I used to drive her mad. I never gave up." He physically overpowers others at school, enjoying the "win". He feels empowered in an expression of anger directed at his father's answering machine and by the termination of his medication, "I feel I have more control of my life." Gizmo exerts power over others in assaultive behaviors.

Loneliness and Isolation

Gizmo experiences physical and emotional isolation in relation to his father, mother and peers. He feel lonely and neglected by his mother, resenting being left alone and longing for more time with her. He fears being left alone, cherishing the time he spends at his friend's house; "cause you're never alone." He longs for emotional closeness and a sense of belonging, clinging to mother-figures who offer him a sense of belonging. He experiences emotional deprivation in lacking closeness to both of his parents. Gizmo perceives his loneliness and isolation as having been imposed on him by others as he persists in his own efforts to belong and to be close.

Experience of Futility in a Lack of Good Faith

Though Gizmo exhibits a courageous perseverance as is exemplified in his efforts to locate his father, he also experiences a sense of hopelessness. He develops an expectation that painful patterns will repeat themselves and an attitude that there is little point to the effort. Hopes are unrealized as father's promises for involvement do not materialize. He subsequently approaches contact with his father cautiously; " I didn't let my guard down and I still haven't." He remains more distant with his mother's male friends, fearing painful separation. He limits his expectations with regard to an improved relationship with his mother.

Apathy is evident in a lack of effort put forth at school. He states, "I didn't give a good shit about anything." He states that he takes whatever comes with regard to his parents: "It's just, whatever." He adds that in relationship to family problems, "I didn't really care."

Feeling Unsafe in His Environment

In early childhood Gizmo experiences sexual exploitation by female baby-sitters. He describes severe punitive measures taken by his mother. He fears parental response that he describes as both unpredictable and severe. He remains "homeless" for two weeks rather than facing the repercussions of his actions: "I was too scared. I didn't want to go home." He reflects on his childhood, marvelling at his independence and lack of supervision. Gizmo perceives his relationship with his mother as lacking stability: "It was up and down, then good then bad, then good then bad. "

Self Protection and Preservation

Gizmo employs defensive strategies to protect his 'emotional self'. He withdraws from his mother as a young child, indicating that he doesn't need her. In desiring the love of his father, he attempts to preserve hope by absorbing responsibility for the lack of contact and by rationalizing his father's excuses. He denies the existence of pain related to his father: "Like it doesn't bother me." In relation to his sexual offense, he rationalizes his involvement, minimizes his responsibility and displaces blame on to his victim in an attempt to preserve his fragile self image: "He brung it on himself. He wanted to try it and I let him, and I was thirteen at the time, and I wasn't on medication."

Experience of Sexual Exploitation

Gizmo describes sexual exploitation by baby-sitters who would strip in front of him when he was approximately four years of age. He further indicates that he engaged in sexual intercourse with a baby-sitter from seven to nine years of age. He does not deny enjoying the incidents as a child but, in retrospect, perceives these events as being a premature initiation into an active sex life by the age of twelve years. He believes having been sexually abused changed his life.

Experience of Physical Abuse

Gizmo reports repeated episodes of physical abuse, getting "lickings" with a metal spatula " for no reason whatsoever." He perceives that his mother enjoyed hurting him. He recalls being punched and beaten "with the nearest weapon", describing a coat hanger with "real sharp edges on it." He indicates that he incurred bruising to all parts of his body. He summarizes his experience, "I felt, you know, abused, like, taken advantage of 'cause I was helpless."

Sense of Longing

Pain of regret results in an empty longing for what has been missed. A young child's longing for father remains in adolescence as he persists in his efforts to maintain contact. He longs for a father-figure: "I always hoped that I would have a father to, like, do stuff with me and play catch." Of all Gizmo's longings, it is a desire for a father that appears to dominate his experience. He longs for maternal love and the ideal of a normal family. He regrets past experiences with his mother, longing for the time together that was missed. He longs to fill the emptiness.

Summary

A child experiences physical abuse and sexual exploitation. He feels neglected and ignored by his mother and experiences ongoing rejection by his father. He struggles for power to negate his experience of helplessness. He feels like a "bad" person, defective from birth. He is medicated, labelled and placed under the care of numerous mental health professionals. He experiences repeated failure at school and is singled out for "bad" behaviors. Hopelessness surfaces but is countered by an intense desire to regain what has been lost. Most of all he wants a father; his father. He becomes angry, lashing out at peers, parents and authority figures . He is convicted of two sexual offenses, one involves use of force with a weapon.

A COMPOSITE PICTURE OF AN ADOLESCENT'S EXPERIENCE

The ten themes that follow represent the essential structures that have emerged as common to all four adolescents in this study. However, many differences exist in the objective aspects of experience. In the context of the subjectively experienced world, the world as lived 'through', the individuals in this study share much in common. The similarities of their experience emerge in the domains of emotions, motivations, thoughts, perceptions, symbolic representations and other subjective aspects. The meanings derived from experiences comprise the life-worlds. It is at this level of experience that commonalities emerge amongst the four youths in this study.

The themes are derived from Tables 3, 6, 9, and 12 which represent the essential experience of Joe, Gary Chris and Gizmo, taken separately. Table 13 lists the common themes. The numbers in parentheses refer to the tables in which the derivative themes are located. The themes of 'Experience of Sexual Exploitation', 'Victim of Sexual Abuse' and 'Premature Sexual Experience', though listed in tables 3, 6, 9 and 12, do not appear in the final list of common themes as one individual has not indicated that early sexual involvement has been part of his experience. In addition, the theme of 'Experience of Physical Abuse' though apparent in only two of the four individuals, has been subsumed under the heading of 'A Helpless Child'. As such this theme is incorporated into the essential description, though being physically abused was experienced by only two of the four participants.

Reflecting on differences of experience, which are increasingly more evident as one reverses the methodological steps from the highest to the lowest level of abstraction, it becomes apparent that different paths of experience have lead to similar destinations.

Table 13

Higher Order Clustering of Common Themes

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1. **An Unloved Child**
    - Feeling Unloved and Unwanted (3, 6, 9, 12)

2. **A Sad Child**
    - Sadness and Depression (3, 6, 9)
    - Experience of Pain and Disappointment (12)

3. **A Devalued Child**
    - Diminished Sense of Self Worth (3, 12)
    - Devaluation of Self (6, 9)

4. **A Bewildered Child**
    - Confusion of Affect (3)
    - Confusion and Inner Turmoil (6)
    - Uncertainty Related to Feelings (9)
    - Confusion and Uncertainty (12)

5. **A Lonely Child**
    - Loneliness and Isolation (3, 6, 9, 12)

6. **A Helpless Child**
    - Disempowerment (3, 6, 9, 12)
    - Sense of Futility (3)
    - Feeling Set Up For Failure (9)
    - External Locus of Control (9)
    - Experience of Futility in a Lack of Good Faith (12)
    - Victim of Physical Abuse (3, 12)

7. **A Fearful Child**
    - Protecting the Physical Self (3)
    - Lack of Rootedness/Need to Anchor Through Concrete Detail (6)
    - Fear of What Lies Ahead (6)
    - Feeling Unsafe in His Environment (9, 12)

8. **A Defended Child**
    - Protecting the Emotional Self (3)
    - Self Protection and Preservation (6, 9, 12)

9. **An Embittered Child**
    - Anger and Resentment (3, 6, 9, 12)

10. **A Child With Longing**
    - Regret of Childhood Lost (3)
    - Yearning For What Could Be (3)
    - Sense of Longing (6, 12)
    - Craving Change/Creating Change (9)

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE OF AN ADOLESCENT SEX OFFENDER

An Unloved Child

A child feels that he is unloved and unwanted by those most significant in his life. This experience begins in early childhood for three of the four boys in this study and persists as a child grows toward manhood. The exception is Chris who indicates that he was loved and nurtured when young but somehow his teen years feel cold and empty. He can't quite live up to the conditions that would allow him to feel loved.

Though Joe and Chris live with both their parents, unlike Gizmo and Gary who's fathers are absent, the shared experience is that those who take care of them do not do so with love. Physical presence of a parent in the home does not preclude emotional absence. All four boys experience emotional deprivation as parental demonstrations of affection are rare. There is little sense of how their parents feel about them although sometimes they are quite sure that they are not wanted or cared for.

Overt, unloving responses by parents and other significant persons, have been identified by the four youths in this study. These include physical abuse, parental rejection and/or abandonment and peer rejection in the form of teasing and ostracism. Demeaning comment by parents in the context of a lack of validation has also been described by adolescents who feel unloved. Punitive parental responses and attentiveness to negative behavior in the absence of positive regard contributes to an overall sense that a child is disliked rather than loved.

A strong foundation of being loved, which presumes some tolerance for parental indiscretions, mistakes or anger, appears lacking for the participants in this study. Without this stable foundation a child assumes that an angry parent is a parent who hates rather than loves. Likewise an absent parent or a legitimately busy parent is easily experienced as an unloving parent by an insecure child who has not internalized the "knowledge" that he is loved.

Though a sense of being unloved is present, the four youths in this study persist in their desire to be loved. They attempt to meet certain conditions in order to be loved and have little first hand experience of unconditional love. The experience is that they have somehow failed to meet the conditions and that they are unlovable. Feeling unloved for these adolescents therefore has to do with contradictory perspectives that one is unlovable and therefore unloved and also that one is lovable but has been received poorly (victimized).

Home and family do not provide the foundations of love that these youth long for. As Joe indicates, "Home would be a place where you feel wanted, wanted and loved. I don't feel that at home."

A Sad Child

The time of childhood has no carefree abandon for a child who feels unloved. A sadness is felt for the 'self' which is rooted in a first hand experience of feeling mistreated by others. A young child experiences sadness as he seeks parental love and affection that is not forthcoming. Experiences of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse contribute to the sadness. Peer rejection compounds the experience. Retrospectively, an adolescent reflects upon his childhood and recognizes with a new clarity, that he has been violated or has somehow 'missed' something. He feels sadness for the 'child' within' the adolescent and for the adolescent himself. There is a grief associated with loss of childhood and the fading of opportunity.

Experiences of multiple losses that continue over extended periods of time and repeated disappointment in others allow sadness to prevail over happiness. Sadness enters as a spoiler whether this is an immediate response to an unhappy event, a retrospective contemplation of a past occurrence or an anticipation of a negative future outcome. Periods of hopelessness intensify the experience of depression.

For the four youths in this study, grief is unresolved whether it is related to loss through death, relocation, marital separation, abandonment, or emotional distance from parents who are physically present. Sadness has also been identified as a response to feeling unduly restricted by parents or authority figures, ongoing criticism and a lack of validation by significant others.

Resurfacing of childhood memories results in re-living the pain. Losses in the present, perceived control by others and anger appear to trigger "crying-type hurt." Most frequently, pain is too deep for tears and is hidden from others. There is little trust that responses from others will be supportive.

The description is that of a child who is more sad than he is happy. It is this distinction that characterizes the theme of a sad child. Whether the terminology used is "bummed out", "really really depressed", "heartbroken" or "down", the four participants in this study are not happy children.

A Devalued Child

The essential theme of a devalued child remains distinct though there exists an interplay of other themes in the final experience of a child who feels inadequate. In a sadness of not feeling loved, a child looks to himself as being unlovable or unworthy of love. Such is the case for Joe,. Gary, Chris and Gizmo. Experiences of rejection and abandonment reinforce this theme.

Whether in the context of achievement at school, relationships with family members or compatibility with peers, a lack of success contributes to a diminished sense of self worth for a child. Repeated experiences of failure in different domains creates for a child a feeling that he is a failure. He looks within himself for an answer as to why he is rejected by others or why he cannot succeed in meeting particular conditions or criteria. As an adolescent reflecting on his childhood he feels that he was set-up for failure. Even with this recognition, he experiences difficulty shedding the well-established sense of himself as incompetent, unlovable, bad or inherently deficient. He has spent a lot of time and effort living up to that identity.

A child experiences humiliation as he is repeatedly singled out for being "bad". He perceives himself as different in a negative way. He believes that the descriptive labels imposed on him by others describe the 'self' rather than the behavior. He has difficulty making the differentiation.

Punitive parental responses, though perceived as excessive, are confusing to a child in that he sees himself as both deserving the punishment yet also feels like a victim of unwarranted cruelty. As in the case of Gizmo, he believes that he somehow "drove" his mother to extreme disciplinary actions. Both Joe and Gizmo report being physically abused by their parent(s). Chris experiences ongoing demeaning comment and excessive restrictiveness by parents as a punishment for failing to meet high standards of performance. Gary is the exception in that he does not report excessive or extreme disciplinary measures by caretakers. Implicit in his experience of maternal abandonment and paternal rejection, is his perception that he is unworthy of love.

A child feels discounted by others as though invisible. He feels unheard by his parents. For example Joe indicates, "even if I do express my opinion nobody listens." A teenager's repeated requests for autonomy are met with parental resistance in the cases of Joe and Chris. Gary wonders why he isn't told anything; why he us not given any answers to questions which intimately impact him. A feeling of being a 'pawn' rather than a 'player' in life is the experience of a child who is moved, removed, placed and "dropped off" He feels like an object. A child experiences a discounting of 'self' as he believes he is as unimportant as the insensitive environment has allowed him to be.

Insults in the place of compliments contribute to a child's perception that he is of little value. Comments like the one's in Chris's experience , "You're so stupid. You're so lazy. You can't do anything right", are internalized and echo in the psyche long after the vocalizations subside. A child seeks validation which is not forthcoming and settles for a cessation of punishment rather than an expectation of reward.

A child hears little from his parents about inner worth and experiences his value as hidden somewhere in the 'doing' rather than the "being'. He needs to meet certain conditions to be deemed lovable. The 'self' is something he can't understand very well. He frequently describes himself in derogatory terms or by external criteria if he is able to describe himself at all.

Acknowledgement of the self, for the four youths in this study, is either nonexistent, contingent on external criteria or predominantly focussed on negative qualities. A child looks at himself through the eyes of others. He experiences a mirrored image of himself which is unsatisfactory. He feels "awkward and embarrassed" and unable to do anything "without screwing up." He diminishes his abilities and strengths. He neglects his appearance. As Joe explains, "I felt like shit, didn't brush my hair, had a bath when I had to. Gizmo adds, "I felt like I was shit." Chris feels "like a mole, like really small." A sense of smallness, shame and embarrassment accompanying sexually offensive behaviors is a common experience shared by the four youths in this study. This and other delinquent actions perpetuate an ongoing perception that there is little value in the 'self'.

A Bewildered Child

Confusion and inner turmoil characterize a bewildered child. It's an experience of wondering which surpasses a child-like inquisitiveness. The questions intimately affect a life and the answers are not forthcoming. A bewildered child experiences confusion in relation to his own feelings and the feelings of others.

Ambivalence towards significant others is evident in the experience of the four participants in this study. A father is perceived as both an abuser and a protector, as in Joe's case or a man who has set a child on the "right track" yet is feared, which is Chris's experience. An absent father is longed for yet he is "hated" and perceived as negligent, as in Gary's example. A child tries to believe in his father but the 'evidence' pointing to his father's lack of interest in him grows with time. He, like Gizmo, agonizes as to whether he is loved or not. He is reluctant to part with the hope that his father's excuses are legitimate. Logic tells him one thing while emotion tells him another.

A child is abandoned by his mother. He is "dropped off" without explanation and left to 'wonder' over a long period of time.

He, like Gary, silently anguishes over not knowing if she will return or why she left him. He looks to himself for an answer as others pay little heed to a child agonizing over whether he is loved or not. He is left 'in the dark' over this and many other intimately crucial aspects of his life. He is not only discounted but placed in a state of inner turmoil that precludes his attentiveness to more age-appropriate tasks of school and peer relations. He experiences a desire to know the worst rather than not know at all. He lives with a lack of resolution in relation to significant others and events.

A child loves his mother because she is his mother but love merges with anger and sometimes with hate as he perceives her as negligent and/or abusive. He feels both happy and sad in her presence. He has little knowledge of how family members feel about him. He knows one should love and be loved by one's parents but for him there is little clarity of affect when he relates this implicit assumption to his own experience.

A boy experiences a blurring of roles within his family. Boundaries appear nonexistent to him as he unhappily assumes a parenting role. He experiences himself as both "guardian angel" to his siblings and perpetrator of physically and sexually abusive behaviors towards them as in the case of Joe. A boy, alone with his mother, takes care of her, fearing that something will happen to her and that he will be without her again. Like in Gary's case he takes liberties in a parent role that are inappropriate for a child and that create conflict in relation to parent-child control issues. He has little understanding of what role family members play.

Feelings are fused and confused. There is little clarity of affect. Making a shift to an affective level of responding creates discomfort in a lack of understanding. Sadness is defined in terms of anger and anger is equally confusing. As Chris indicates, "I'd get this weird feeling and I'd be like, what am I feeling." For Joe, too, the suddenness of his anger response creates confusion. Self control for Gary involves control of anger as he becomes carried away in physical wrestling with girls; "so I've got to hold back some of my feelings, some of my actions, the wondering, the feelings that I've had in the past like the things about my grandmother and why the girls spread it around the school, feelings of wondering." For Gary, past fuses with present in a confused description of affect.

Gizmo sums up his own experience. From my understanding, any one of the boys could have used the same words in relation to their childhood. "It was all confused. It's all confused feelings. I didn't really know what I was feeling most of the time." (And now?) "I don't know."

A Lonely Child

An experience of loneliness characterizes a child who is emotionally and physically isolated. A feeling of being unloved and unwanted contributes to an overall sense of not belonging. A lonely child may perceive that this is imposed by others. He may also recognize that, through his own efforts, he isolates himself. For the participants in this study, the essential experience, however derived, is one of aloneness.

A child perceives himself as an outsider amongst peers. In repeated failed attempts at acceptance he thinks like Joe, "I'll be lonely over by myself." A child's difficulty 'fitting in' is compounded by frequent relocations, as in Gary's situation. The few relationships that developed lack depth as he perceives friends as "sortof acquaintances." A child feels "shut out" by peers as in Joe's situation or he feels shut in, as in the case of Chris, whose experience of loneliness is perceived as being less from rejection and more from restriction. He perceives himself as being kept in a state of loneliness by parents who will not allow him to have the desired peer contact. A child feels like he does not belong when he is singled out and reprimanded for bad behaviors in front of peers as in the case of Gizmo. His view of himself as a "real popular guy" identifies him as an exception in relation to being physically isolated from peers however his perception of himself as somehow deficient contributes to an experience of being different from others in a negative way. He seeks friendships amongst peers who, like him, do not quite fit the criteria for mainstream group membership.

A child's experience of family and home is central to his sense of belonging or exclusion. An experience of loneliness within the context of home and family is common to the four youths in this study though the physical characteristics of their individual family structures are different.

Two youth (Gary and Gizmo) who are only children being raised by single parent mothers, experience physical aloneness. A young child longs for the physical presence of his parent(s). He feels neglected when the parent(s) are absent. His experience is that he is alone alot. He is unhappy and sometimes frightened when his parent is absent. He feels neglected and sorry for himself. As in the case of Gizmo, he either persists in his efforts to be in contact with his absent father or, like Gary, silently waits to see if his father will contact him. He endures rejection and ongoing disappointment but his desire for a relationship persists. He feels emotionally separated from both his parents. He wishes his mother would show him more love and affection. He experiences multiple losses as he says goodbye to many individuals in whom he was emotionally invested. He keeps his feelings "locked away" and intentionally remains emotionally distant in order to avoid anticipated pain of separation. In this way he further isolates himself.

Two youth (Chris and Joe) live in two parent families and each have several siblings. A young child grows up surrounded by people and feels lost in a crowd. He does not feel noticed and longs for 'his own space'. He experiences a sense that he doesn't belong either because he is not as good at "doing" as other members or because he violates the family norms. He perceives the rules which govern membership as unreasonable and even harmful to himself. He is caught in a dilemma. He isolates himself from family members keeping his feelings to himself or by physically withdrawing to his room. He senses an emotional distance amongst family members. He recognizes a lack of affection and emotional expression within the home. He feels alone in a crowd.

The common thread in the four examples provided is emotional isolation within the family unit. A child feels alone when he lacks an emotional connection to others. He perpetuates this experience by keeping his emotions "locked away" or by distancing himself to avoid an anticipated painful outcome.

Whether left on his own or in the presence of peers or family members, a child who lacks an emotional connectedness with others experiences a sense of loneliness and isolation. The four youth in this study are lonely children.

A Helpless Child

A child feels helpless in an environment that disempowers. He experiences an inability to influence life's happenings. He has little say and less control over events which impact him personally. He sees others taking control over him; sometimes they hurt him and he can't make them stop. Soon he feels no power within himself. This is an uncomfortable feeling. He tries to get some power back in a dysfunctional re-claiming. He is determined to experience a sense of power; so determined that sometimes he hurts others in the process. The four youth in this study describe experiences that bear a close resemblance to this description. It was from their own accounts that it was derived.

A child perceives his home environment as overly restrictive and inflexible. He feels he has no input, experiencing a lack of autonomy as decisions are made for him. Attempts to express the self are met with disapproval unless such expression mirrors the sentiments of those who establish the criteria of acceptable thoughts, feelings and actions within the home. In a case such as Joe's, it's their (parents') way or no other way." The self struggling for recognition, becomes somehow lost as having any capacity to influence, determine or exert control in it's own right. A sense of being under the power of someone or something else, other than the self, emerges for the youth in this study. As Chris states, "it's like somebody's got a power trip over me."

A child learns that control comes from 'without' rather than from 'within'. He hears his parents refer to his behaviors as the product of stage in life and rather than an exemplification of individual differences. He adjusts his idea of responsibility accordingly. He needs his "punisher" to be present or sources of temptation to be absent before he feels confident that he will 'behave' appropriately. A lack of confidence in his own ability to monitor his behaviors persists. He feels 'caught' as he resents the very control he seeks.

The youths in this study express concerns about losing control. This feeling is a frightening one. Gary states, "It's really scary, thinking how to act, how not to act. I might do the wrong thing." Outbursts of anger are perceived as somehow outside of the self. Anger is perceived as a powerful and unpredictable force waiting to reappear and take over. Feelings of entrapment, for the youth in this study, accompany attempts to control the self. Feeling "trapped" is also experienced when others exert authority.

A feeling of being trapped contributes to a child's sense of helplessness. The four youth in this study perceive that their actions, thoughts and feelings have been confined; that is, not permitted expression. A youth feels his "life" has been under the control of doctors, teacher and parents. As Gizmo states, "they were controlling my life, what I do, what I feel." A child has a sense of himself as an 'object' being moved, removed, and placed. The swiftness or unpredictability with which life takes a turn is somehow like magic as a child perceives himself as having no effect on a life that is his own. His life is perceived as the 'property' of someone or something else other than the self.

A helpless watching accompanies repeated disappointments in others. A child lacks strength in the self as he feels powerless to endear others to him or to prevent painful losses and events. There is entrapment for a youth who experiences that efforts are futile whether the desired outcome is a sense of his own autonomy or a relief from psychic pain.

With a pervasive sense of helplessness that is ongoing over a long period of time, an experience that efforts are futile emerges. This is apparent in Joe's apathetic attitude. He indicates, " well, I figure they (parents) are going to screw me around for the rest of my life so what the hell." This is also exemplified by Chris who gets "lazy" and no longer tries to meet parental standards of performance that he perceives as perfectionistic. Gizmo speaks of not giving "a good shit about anything" as he experiences repeated failure and disappointment. A sense of futility does not emerge as an essential theme in Gary's experience, however he has a fear of abandonment and rejection that presumes an expectation of negative outcome. Apathy, in an experience of depression, exists for Gary as it does for the other youth interviewed. In this way his experience is similar to the other youth interviewed.

For two of the youth in this study, Joe and Gizmo, an experience of physical abuse makes a significant contribution to an experience of powerlessness. Joe looks to his father to save him from his mother's wrath, while Gizmo recoils in a sense of self as small, weak and defenseless. The event of physical abuse adds physical pain to psychic pain. The essential experience of helplessness in the context of parental emotional abuse or neglect is shared by the four youth in this study though not all were victims of physical abuse.

A child's experience of powerlessness is met by an intense desire to gain a sense of power. Attempts to overpower others through physically, verbally and sexually assaultive behaviors are exhibited by the participants in this study. For example, Joe behaves violently towards his siblings and his parents. He sexually assaults his siblings sometimes by force and sometimes by other coercive methods. The same closet used by his mother to confine him becomes his means of entrapping his young sister. Gary verbally lashes back at adults. Profanities abound in his everyday conversation. He overpowers younger females through assaultive behaviors. He loses control as play fighting escalates into sexual assault. Chris perceives crime as "a power trip'. He readily identifies a powerful feeling that results for him in sexually assaulting his two young male victims. "It was like, you can't do nothing about it. I'm in charge here." Gizmo takes pride in the "win" as he fights with peers. His power struggles with his mother as a child persist in his experience as a teen, "I would always get her back." He is convicted of sexual assault using a weapon, though the weapon never enters his account of the assault.

The theme of a helpless child encompasses 'Disempowerment', 'External Locus of Control', 'Experience of Physical Abuse", 'A Sense of Futility', 'Feeling Set Up For Failure' and 'Taking Control'. Each of the youth has his own experience of disempowerment. The feeling of helplessness and the need to regain power emerges as an essential experience that is common to the four participants in the study. Maintaining a sense of power, as Chris suggests "Is just something your body wants to do."

A Fearful Child

A child feels unsafe in an environment that fails to protect, that is unpredictable and lacking in stability. Whether he takes protective action alone or solicits the help of others, he defends against immediate danger or perceived threat. The condition is a lack of safety, the response is one of protection and the essential experience is fear.

An atmosphere of family violence is experienced as unsafe by a child caught in it's midst. He feels unprotected and vulnerable in an experience of abuse of power which is directed at himself. He feels both the pain of physical injury and of psychic scarring as a parent transforms from protector to perpetrator. As in the cases of Joe and Gizmo, a child fears for his physical safety in a place that for some is a sanctuary from insult. He runs away from the place of home rather than to it, hiding 'outside' of the home and 'inside' of himself. In fear, he hides from assaults to his physical and emotional self. Secrets are perceived as safer than truths.

A child feels the sting of parental lashes in the form of verbal insults and seeks out a defensive strategy. He lashes back, withdraws or solicits the assistance of others in defense. Though his fears are not centered on physical violence, as in the case of Chris, his experience of feeling intimidated and his lack of ability to predict parental responses, perpetuate his sense that he is unsafe. He experiences anxiety in anticipation. He appears hypervigilent, like Chris, who indicates that his mother "gets mad too fast" and his father gets "more mad" than is warranted by "something I've done". A watchful child tailors his behavior to fit the mood of his unpredictable parent.

A child feels chronic anxiety in his mother's absence. His fears, like Gary's, center about issues of parental abandonment and rejection. He fears his mother will leave him voluntarily or be taken from him in some way. Even in her presence he experiences the fear, recalling the long and painful separation that marked his childhood. Paternal absence compounds his fear.

A child experiences a lack of stability in being uprooted. He experiences life itself as unpredictable in the context of hurried departures, painful goodbyes and change in the absence of a foundation of sameness. In the lack of concrete items of history he attempts to anchor himself and construct a meaningful world in the fear of a childhood lost. He attempts to memorizes in detail the physical characteristics of his past homes and surroundings while eliminating painful experiences from his consciousness. Of the four youth interviewed, it is Gary who most clearly exemplifies a child who has lacks stability in the place of home and constancy in parental caregiving.

The paths in life are different for the four participants in this study. What is the same is that they walk them with many fears and insecurities.

A Defended Child

A child not only fears for his physical safety but also for his emotional well-being. He protects himself in many ways. The use of psychological defense strategies persists in the experience of Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo be they consciously employed against perceived threat or unconsciously at work to preserve a fragile psyche. A fearful child emerges as a defended child. When the world is experienced as threatening a child tries to take care of the emotional self. Sometimes the strategies employed to preserve health impede it's development, instead. It's hard for a defended child to know when he is safe and when he isn't. It may be difficult for him to leave the past behind.

A child who experiences the pain of rejection by others fears that the pain will recur. In the context of ongoing peer rejection a child withdraws from the needed companionship, as in the case of Joe. A child feels rejected by his parent(s) and names himself the rejector as in the case of Gary. He rationalizes that he doesn't need or want the affection as in Gizmo's experience. In an experience of repeated loss of loved ones, rejection and disappointment, a child attempts to protect himself from psychic pain by limiting his emotional investment. He remains 'guarded' in his interpersonal relationships giving only what he can afford to lose. When he is unable to facilitate the detachment he denies the pain of rejection or loss rather than consciously experience the dreaded pain once again. He attempts to convince himself that people places and things are not important to him. Examples of these defensive responses are apparent in the experiences of the youth in this study who feel rejected by parents and/or peers.

A child who lacks trust in others suppresses his affective responses to avoid vulnerability. As Joe indicates, "I learned to block out my feelings real quick." He, like the other participants in this study cries "inside". Sadness and happiness are not easily detected on the masked faces of these youth. A facade of bravado is more readily discernable. A child hides his private self when the public have not received him well.

A child experiences emotional trauma and feels the pain at a conscious level. He copes, like Gary, in a state of agitation waiting for a life event to occur that will alleviate his anxiety. In Gary's situation he waits for his mother to return or his father to acknowledge him. He maintains hope for a time but experiences a weakening of his emotional self. When ongoing life events become psychically unmanageable a child becomes defended at an unconscious level. In Gary's case the traumatic event of his grandmother's death by suicide is unmanageable at an emotional level. The pain of loss in repressed. He doesn't consciously grieve. As a teenager he still hasn't grieved and asks whey he feels nothing in relation to his profound loss. The fragile ego of a traumatized child is thus preserved.

A child attempts to normalize or neutralize his experience to make it more tolerable. He attempts to create an acceptable reality. He experiences confusion as he describes caretakers as loving and nurturing then contradicts himself as his created image is replaced by another opposite perception. For example, Chris minimizes parental conflict and shortcomings and rationalizes restrictiveness yet perceives his parents as harsh and unreasonable.

A teenager attempts to suppress painful memories of his childhood but ongoing life events serve as triggers for painful memories and associated affect. As Gary indicates, "(I am) pretty happy whenever I'm trying to forget the past, well, the things that hurt me or whenever I have forgotten them." The sudden resurfacing of painful memories is experienced as an unwanted phenomenon and much energy is expended in attempts at suppression. A child fears the 'triggers'.

A teenager, convicted of a sexual offense, attempts to preserve his fragile self image. In accounts of his offensive behavior he rationalizes his involvement, displaces blame onto his victim, minimizes his behavior and justifies his actions. For example, Gary's victims both received bruising to the breast area yet he indicates that he was trying to pinch their arms. He states, "she pinched me so I hit her." Chris describes the erotic behaviors of his three and five year old victims and emphasizes that he was "at a stage when hormones were acting up". Gizmo states, "he (victim) wanted to try and I let him and I was thirteen at the time and I wasn't on medication." Joe, unlike the others, takes responsibility for his involvement in sexually assaulting his siblings. His account was void of defensiveness. It should be noted that he has been in therapy longer than the other participants. Accepting responsibility for offensive behaviors has been a major focus of therapy.

The youth in this study employ various defensive strategies for self protection and preservation. A teenager wants to feel good about himself. He wants to have good memories. He want the fears and the pain to go away. He tries to make it happen even if he fools himself in the process.

An Embittered Child

Indignation and anger characterize an embittered child. Pain turns to anger in the recognition of neglect and violation. The four participants in this study experience an ongoing anger with their parents. They easily become angry about many things in life. There is a feeling that they have not been treated properly and life has done them a disservice. They feel deprived and victimized.

A child feels overwhelmed as he is placed in a parenting role becoming increasingly frustrated at his inability to cope. He resents that imposed caretaking responsibilities preclude his attentiveness to age-appropriate activities and concerns. He wants to be a child. He lashes out at those left in his care and feels intense anger at his parents for neglecting what he perceives as their responsibilities. He wants to be nurtured rather than exploited and experiences anger. For example, Joe indicates that when his parents left him in charge, "I used to get mad and then I'm always mad. He associates his anger with sexually abusing his young sister.

A child experiences intense anger in a recognition of parental neglect. He resents being left alone or ignored and feels unloved and unwanted. He raises his voice to be heard but still he feels he is not noticed. He directs anger at those perceived as negligent and he directs anger at himself for being unlovable, bad or deficient.

A child encounters repeated disappointment in others. He experiences this as pain. He feels angry that pain has been imposed on him. A child exhibits his anger in many ways. Some expressions are more overt than others. As in the case of Gary he may refer to his father as a "bad man" and talk about hatred "in the stomach and in the head." He may use profanities in reference to his parents and physically assault them, like Joe. He may steal from his parent like Gizmo or find other ways to "drive her mad". He may fear the repercussions of his anger to the extent that, like Chris, he displaces the anger and acts in a manner that does not appear angry on the surface. Chris clearly describes this response. "When I would get angry I'd just go into my bedroom and listen to music and then the next day I'd go stealing or something. And that made me feel okay and then I'd go stealing again.

A teenager seeks autonomy but feels unduly restricted experiencing a parental control which is described as dictatorial as in the case of Chris and inflexible as in Joe's situation. He believes that parental standards and that decisions which are made for him are not conducive to his healthy development. He feels, like Joe, that his parents' "definitely want to screw up my life." A child like Chris feels angry when he is punished for not being perfect.

An abused child feels.victimized whether the abuse is emotional, physical or sexual. Physical and emotional lashes are experienced as profound rejection and a child feels "hated" rather than loved. This experience is shared by the participants in this study though only Joe and Gizmo relate incidents of physical abuse. A child feels angry when he is ridiculed and belittled. An example of this is seen in Chris's experience. For two of the participants, Joe and Gizmo, early childhood sexual exploitation is perceived as having contributed to their own subsequent involvement in sexually offensive behaviors. Like the other participants who feel victimized in one way or another, they resent the people who are perceived as having made a negative contribution to their life. A child's anger is fuelled by an overall sense of violation against his person. A teenager looks back on his childhood and names the experience abusive.

A child feels intensely angry. He feels angry much of the time and sometimes he doesn't understand the feeling or it's source. His lifeworld is experienced as bitter rather than sweet and much of what he does feels contaminated by this bitterness. Anger is experienced as pervasive, intense, confusing and out of control. Chris refers to it as a "weird feeling." Joe personifies anger as a powerful phenomenon overtaking his body, "well hello, I'm back." For the four youths in this study, controlling intense feelings of anger presents as a challenge that they are frequently unprepared to meet. Losing control of anger can be a frightening experience for them as the repercussions are frequently severe, not only for themselves but for others around them.

A Child with Longing

A child craves what he perceives is lacking in his experience. He regrets what has passed him by and yearns for what could be. He desires to change not only what is but what has been. An empty longing is experienced in a recognition of what has been missed. Though his perceptions of the past can change overtime, he may create the desired changes by distorting the picture in an attempt to deceive his own reality.

A longing for a 'normal' home and family life is experienced by the four youths in this study. A child craves emotional intimacy and unconditional love of mother and father. A teenager reflects on a childhood that is nearly passed and regrets the loss of time and opportunity. As Joe indicates, "I just missed what regular families had, parents that were around all the time to play and we loved them." He regrets a lack of emotional intimacy with his parents and has a sense of emptiness that persists as a strong yearning to fill the void. Like Gizmo and Gary, he forms attachments to mother-figures perceiving affectionate babysitters and neighbors to be "like a mother".

In the absence of contact with a father a young boy perceives his mother's male friends as potential father figures and role models. Profound disappointment accompanies the loss of this opportunity in his longing for father. Though he experiences ongoing rejection as a child his longing persists as a teenager. For example Gary and Gizmo wait for acknowledgements that are not forthcoming. As Gary indicates, "I'm still waiting." A child's longing for love and intimacy within the family unit persists in the absence of affection, whether parents are physically present or live outside of a child's home. Joe and Chris are examples of children who yearn for affection in the context of a physically intact family unit.

A teenager feels pain in reflecting on a childhood that is perceived as lost. He attempts to create a more acceptable picture of his family life and place of home. He idealizes accounts of people and places in his memory, filling in the gaps to make a picture whole. In an experience of profound instability of home, a child attempts to anchor himself and make an elusive experience concrete. For example, Gary memorizes physical details of his past homes and provides idealized accounts of parenting received. Like Chris, who minimizes parental shortcomings and family problems, he condones his experience at a rational level. At an emotional level he longs for what he creates.

A child longs for validation and seeks what he has not received. Like Chris, he searches for compliments and encouragement. He wishes, like Joe, that his parents would listen when he expresses his need for recognition. Like Gary and Gizmo, a child longs to be noticed by those who matter most. A teenager seeks the peace of knowledge and asks for an end to the inner turmoil which accompanies the unanswered questions of his childhood.

A desire for autonomy emerges for youth who feel they have earned the right to parental trust by virtue of their advancing years. A teenager recognizes his need to function more independently as a prerequisite to a movement away from the family unit. He longs for independence while clinging to his unfulfilled desire to be intimately connected with those who are significant in his life. He yearns for the support of family and friends to ease his passage into adulthood.

The four individuals in this study long for intimacy, autonomy, validation and support. They yearn for the ideal of home and family, for friendships and for peace of mind. The longing persists where the need is the greatest.

Concluding Comment

Ten themes of experience have emerged. They are best considered as interactive rather than independent. The overlap amongst themes exemplifies that meaning is found in context. The interplay between a person and his world culminates in a picture which is more a 'snapshot' in time than a lasting photograph. The themes listed in Table thirteen represent the lived experience of four adolescent males who have committed sexual offenses. The findings of this study represent my understanding of what they 'see' in the 'photograph' at this point in time.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ten themes were identified in the lived experience of four adolescent sex offenders. Though the youths in this study revealed many and varied experiences in their 'life stories', they shared a remarkable similarity in terms of the meaning of those experiences. From my understanding of their own descriptions, the developmental context within which each youth has been immersed has not only failed to nourish healthy growth, but has, at times, been active in blocking it's potential. This is not to suggest that individuals in this study have failed to develop, but rather that they have failed to thrive. Much as an undernourished or chronically ill child may fail to reach physical growth potential, a child whose emotional needs are not met may be weak and underdeveloped in an emotional and spiritual sense. Rather than seeing a happy, loving, hopeful, confident and productive child, we see sadness, confusion, self-reproach, fear, bitterness and hostility. Four youths have grown and developed but they embrace their past with an empty yearning rather than a healthy optimism. The needs of these youth emerge as similar and unmet.

Reflections and Referral to Existing Literature

In reflecting on the findings of this study, I am reminded of developmental considerations such as have been put forth by Erikson (1963, 1968). In seeing the neediness of these four youths and their striving for satisfaction of needs, the hierarchy of needs presented by Maslow (1968) comes to mind as relevant. In consideration of the growth potential and ultimate goodness within each child, the writings of Carl Rogers (1961) have significance. In the following section, I have related existing research and literature to my own findings. In addition, I have made reference to theorists whose contributions appear most relevant.

The four youths in this study feel unloved by those most significant in their lives. They experience a lack of emotional intimacy with their parents. These findings are compatible with earlier research cited in chapter one of this project. Disturbed parent-child relations have been identified in the experience of adolescent sex offenders. Lack of affection by parents and lack of indulgence by fathers have been identified as significant (Lang and Langevin, 1991; Langevin et al, 1985). Steele and Ryan (1991) suggest that the most pervasive common element in those who maltreat children is the feeling of not having been adequately loved. A lack of empathic modelling is implicated as significant in the developmental history of pedophiliacs. They describe a possible merging of a need for true intimacy with sexual activity in an emptiness left over from bleak childhood experience. Lane (1991) proposes that the experience of abandonment may lead to sexually abusive behaviors. The participants in the present study experience a lack of empathic modelling, feel rejected by parents and crave the intimate connection with 'other' that is missing in their lives.

Erikson (1963) describes adolescence as a time of inner turmoil that can be resolved by gaining recognition and support from significant others. A loving holding environment can facilitate a successful 'letting go' of childhood and is crucial to the formation of a positive identity. According to Erikson, successful resolution of the adolescent crisis (identity vs. identity diffusion) is essential in developing a capacity to be faithful in later life. This is necessary for intimacy and for loving orientation which involves a sincere concern for the welfare of others. The capacity to love is seen as a mutuality of devotion. In this perspective, it would appear that being loved and wanted is important in the development of a capacity to love in an intimate way. Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo feel unloved and unwanted. They have reached to others in a sexually abusive manner which is not founded on mutual devotion or respect.

Maslow (1968) describes belongingness and love needs as basic and essential. These are considered pre-potent as motivators in a striving toward a higher goal of self-actualization. According to Maslow, failure to satisfy love and belongingness needs may result in the 'unloved' individual seeking love through deficiency (D-love) in an anxious and manipulative manner.

The theme of 'A Sad Child' has emerged in the experience of an adolescent sex offender. The preceding literature review has identified depression as a problem experienced by adolescent sex offenders. Adolescent child molesters report more problems with depression than do non-delinquents and non-sex offending delinquents (Katz, 1990). Lane (1991) describes the hopelessness distortion as a common misperception of adolescent sex offenders adding that depression often increases over time. My findings compliment Lane's observations in that the individuals in the present study have described experiences that are referred to, by Lane, as common to adolescent sex offenders. She indicates that the adolescent appears to experience an increased sensitivity to any situation or event that is reminiscent of the original event. Current events that trigger dysfunctional responses for juveniles have been identified as moving, feeling put down, entering a new school, getting bad grades, being told no, rejection by peers, parental conflicts and restrictions, criticisms, parental re-marriage, being challenged and friends moving away. Negative feelings are evoked as more types of events remind the individual of the original situation.

Erikson (1963) indicates that the very earliest stage of development forms the basic sense of trust and basic sense of mistrust which remains a source of both hope and doom through life. To the extent that trust predominates, the infant learns to regard the world with an enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes. I believe that the child who has learned to trust is better prepared to overcome feelings of sadness in the realization that all is not lost and things can get better. The youths in this study mistrust their environment. Experiences of loss, repeated disappointment in others and futile efforts to affect change in parental and peer responses toward them, contribute to a sense of hopelessness as they fail to trust that good things will come their way. Sadness and depression are apparent in the experiences of these youths.

The four youths in this study experience a diminished sense of self worth. They have been devalued and devalue themselves. What they have seen of themselves through the eyes of others has not been particularly encouraging. The findings of this study in relation to a diminished sense of self worth, are compatible with existing literature and research pertaining to this issue. As cited earlier, researchers have noted that adolescent child molesters experience low self-esteem, a lack of assertiveness and self-consciousness (Steele & Ryan,1991; Katz,1990; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky & Deisher,1986). Lane (1991) suggests that juvenile sex offenders harbor negative assumptions about themselves. This is apparent in the four youths in the present study who perceive themselves as unlovable, deficient and "bad". They are sensitive to corrective comment which is perceived as a challenge to a fragile sense of self.

Responses of anger and taking power and control have been noted in this study. Lane (1991) describes such responses as dysfunctional and compensatory, as the offender seeks a sense of adequacy by attempting to exert power over others. Temporary relief results but ultimately self doubt in increased, thus the pattern is repeated. Enduring negative perceptions of self and repeated compensatory responses are apparent in the experiences of the four youth in this study.

There is much to be said about the development of a strong sense of self and an evaluation of that self that is favorable, at all stages of development. It is, however, the time of adolescence that has been identified as crucial in the development of a strong ego identity (Erikson, 1963). Erikson considers this the prime task of adolescence and the precursor to intimacy. According to Erickson, letting go, in a movement from childhood to adulthood, requires a trust both in self and in those who will receive that self. The youths in this study have not experienced a firm foundation from which to venture forth. Erikson indicates that a normally competent ego can be seriously weakened by social trauma, physical ills and by failure to resolve prior epigenetic crises, often prevented by pathogenic social influences. Ego qualities of willpower, a sense of purpose and competence are developed prior to adolescence in an environment of safety, parental approval and freedom from fear. The youth in this study have grown in an environment that is largely lacking in the characteristics that nurture strength of ego. A low sense of self and difficulties in establishing intimacy exist for the youths in this study. Development, according to Erikson, does not stop but it may be drastically altered.

The participants in this study have developed negative identities in that they perceive themselves as bad, incompetent or deficient. According to Erikson (1968) delinquents have a mistrust of themselves and a disbelief in the possibility that they could ever complete anything of value. What is needed for a strong positive identity is the support of significant social groups. Joe, Chris, Gary and Gizmo do not experience a strong sense of being supported.

Maslow (1968) describes esteem needs as those that provide motivation in a striving for recognition, appreciation and mastery. Other pre-potent needs of safety and belongingness and love must be satisfied to some extent before esteem needs act as motivators. The participants in this study seek to satisfy esteem needs while at the same time, are intensely concerned with personal safety, love and belongingness. As Maslow has indicated higher needs may emerge after lower ones have been severely frustrated rather than gratified, however attempts to satisfy needs which emerge in this way may be a-typical.

Carl Rogers (1961) states that all human beings need warmth, respect and acceptance from significant others as primary. He indicates that from this emerges a secondary learned need, that of positive self-regard. When conditions are placed on the love (would like you "if") children have trouble, according to Rogers, because they never have the feeling of acceptance. They can grow up feeling that they are wrong, stupid and inferior. In the present study, the four youths feel unloved and unwanted. Their failure to meet the 'conditions' that would make them lovable compounds their feelings of unworthiness. Perhaps a sense of being unlovable is learned rather than a positive regard for self.

The participants in this study have been described under the theme of 'A Bewildered Child'. In a bewildered child there is little room for the magical wonder that is more readily associated with childhood. The curious child who seeks knowledge for the sake of knowledge differs from the child who seeks answers relative to his own survival or self preservation. Maslow indicates that curiosity and exploration are higher needs than safety. The need to feel safe, secure, unanxious and unafraid is prepotent; stronger than curiosity. Exploration for learning is more apt to take place out of a safe holding environment where an anxiety free person can feel more courageous and seek out information. Maslow states, "A safety philosophy is more apt to be blind than a growth philosophy." (p.65). In my opinion, whether related to academic subjects or basic life skills, learning for the four boys in this study has been impeded by anxiety, confusion and concerns of a more pressing nature.

Though the available literature pertaining to adolescent sex offenders does not make reference to the particular theme of 'A Bewildered Child', in my view this experience is closely related to the experience of devaluation of self. The child whose questions are unanswered is likely to feel ignored and discounted. Without knowledge it is difficult to move forward with confidence or certainty. In addition, in my view, the child 'in the dark' is a disempowered child. The theme of the bewildered child is qualitatively different, however, in that there exists an anguished seeking for answers.

Maslow (1968) indicates that the basic safety needs are potent in their motivating function and encompass freedom from anxiety and chaos. According to Maslow, knowledge is an effective way to satisfy these needs. For the four boys in this study, the experience is one of inner turmoil and chaos resulting from a lack of knowing. There is little certainty with regard to their own feelings and the feelings of others. They experience a lack of safety in uncertainty and unpredictability. Maslow indicates that safety needs are environment dependent. A pathogenic environment can easily inhibit positive potentials and evoke hatred, destruction and self-defeating behaviors.

Researchers have identified loneliness and isolation in the experience of sex offenders. The youths in this study spoke of loneliness as an essential part of their experience. My findings are compatible with earlier research as cited in chapter one of this thesis (see Sanders,1988. Katz, 1990, Gilgun, 1988). Social isolation, loneliness, lack of peer support and an unfulfilled need for a confidant are significant variables in the childhood experience of the participants in this study. Inadequate attachment bonds have been indicated as contributing to an inability to form intimate relationships (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). The youth in this study experience ongoing frustration in their experience of superficiality in relationships, seeking a deeper intimacy that appears somehow unreachable.

Belongingness and love needs, as described by Maslow (1968) involve a hunger for affectionate relationships. Some degree of satisfaction of these needs is necessary before esteem needs can be adequately addressed. It is noteworthy that in the teen years, peers become significant in formation of a strong ego-identity (Erikson,1963). Emotional support from others is seen as important by Erikson, in resolving inner turmoil and conflict. The youth in this study experience a lack of emotional support.

If an adolescent experiences a need to preserve a tenuous and fragile identity, isolation and self absorption may result in an inability to fuse identities with another through intimacy. The participants in this study experience emotional isolation rather than intimacy. In their teen years they seek intimacy but fear that they may behave inappropriately. It may be that they have not learned the meaning of emotional intimacy. According to Erikson (1968 p.136): "Where a youth does not accomplish intimate relationships with others or within himself, he may settle for superficial interpersonal relations and retain a deep sense of isolation."

The youths in this study have emerged as fearful and defended. They do not feel protected and seek to protect both the physical and the emotional parts of themselves. Safety needs are of foremost importance according to Maslow. These will act as motivators for action to the exclusion of other higher needs, if they do not receive a degree of satisfaction. A child who fears for his safety must deal with this deficiency need before he can consider the "being" needs as having relevance as motivators. From this perspective, it is difficult for a fearful child to realize his potentials.

Adolescence, according to Erikson (1963) is a time for letting go of the safehold of childhood. What happens for the boy who has not felt safe as he prepares to launch into adulthood? How much fear is there in a child who feels little strength within, as he stands on the brink of independent functioning? A lack of stability in childhood, experiences of physical and sexual abuse, rejection, abandonment and belittlement are evident in the experiences of the four participants in this study and contribute to an overall feeling of fearfulness. Maslow might say that their early needs for safety and security have not been satisfied.

A fearful child attempts to protect himself against real or perceived threat. Defense mechanisms persist in the experience of the participants. They feel threatened in their worlds. Lane indicates that defense mechanisms employed by adolescent sex offenders may include reaction formation, compensation and suppression. According to Lane (1991) the adolescent attempts to rationalize or support offensive behavior in an effort to accept his behavior without self-deprication. She further indicates that adolescent sex offenders frequently attempt to avoid anticipation of loss of control by sleeping, withdrawing to their rooms, watching T.V. and becoming preoccupied in a crowd. In addition, they attempt to avoid negative feelings of helplessness and inadequacy. The four youth in this study remain well defended as they attempt to protect themselves, their families and their ideals in the creation of a meaningful reality.

Emotional and physical pain, for the four boys in this study, are readily recalled as an integral component of their experience. "Hurt" rests within the memory despite attempts to eliminate it's existence. Perceptions of pain as having been other-imposed result in resentment and bitterness. Sometimes the anger is directed at the source. Sometimes it is displaced in a generalized application. Innocent individuals become implicated as does the self. It is a recognition of violation and an incongruence between what should be or could be and what has been or 'is' that creates a sense of having been wronged for these youths. Frustration in a helplessness to right the situation, perpetuates feelings of anger.

My findings in relation to the adolescent sex offender as 'An Embittered Child' are compatible with earlier research. Lane (1991) states that hopeless and helpless feelings experienced by adolescent sex offenders are eventually replaced by anger. To preserve a sense of adequacy, responsibility for these feelings is placed on others and a victim stance develops. A sense of outrage builds as they begin to believe that they deserve some retaliation or compensation. This is apparent in the angry comments made by the youths in this study and by their inappropriate responses to others. Mayer (1980) indicates that a great number of sex offenders experience childhood traumas which have resulted in anger that is often suppressed, repressed or otherwise re-directed.

Anger can become the fuel for dysfunctional behaviors and for pain imposed on others. It can also be the seeds of growth in a child's recognition of violation. It is my view that a child enters life in innocence and goodness and this is either fostered or stymied by those who receive the child. In my view, an adolescent who recognizes a violation of his inner worth and feels anger in that recognition, knows something of himself as a precious child, deserving better. Carl Rogers (1961) describes an innate tendency to actualize benign inner potentials and describes pitfalls along the path to actualization that occur in unfair circumstances. Maslow (1968) indicates that conflicts may be a sign of health rather than pathology when inner turmoil is caused by an inability to accept distorted standards of others. Pathological needs, however, arise as unconscious substitutes for fundamental needs such as safety, love, esteem and self-actualization and may be insatiable and unfulfilling.

This view is compatible with my own findings. In this study, the participants view their parents' directives and actions as mean, outrageous, dictatorial, and irresponsible. Children watch, feel and become angry. Teenagers, with an increased capacity for reasoning, reflect, feel and become outraged. The anger when intense, misdirected and out of control becomes a dangerous phenomenon not only in relation to their own development but to the safety of others.

Lane (1991) describes the adolescent sex offender as having an empty yearning left over from bleak childhood experience. The model presented (see chapter one) is a compensatory one in that it represents an adolescent's attempts to take back what has been lost.

A sense of longing emerges for Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo in their recognition of what has been missed. It encompasses both a desire to undo the wrongs and a "wish" for something more in the future. The phenomenon of longing, from my perspective, can become a driving force that promotes a healthier, happier experience or it can remain as regret in pining, depression and vindictive actions. In my opinion, the material for longing in relation to the four youth in this study, has arisen in domains where needs remain unsatisfied. A seeking for satisfaction of basic needs of safety and love persists for these youths. As Maslow indicates, these are potent motivators. He believes that our inner nature is good but that it is weak, delicate and easily overcome by a wrong attitude toward it. "Even though weak it rarely disappears. Even though denied, it persists underground forever, pressing for actualization." (p.4). From this perspective, a longing can be perceived as a desire to satisfy basic needs in service of a higher need to become the best one can (that is to become self-actualized). Maslow describes a conscious or unconscious yearning that exists in the subjective experience that something is missing yet somehow reachable. From my understanding, for the four adolescents in this study, the longing exists where there is an unsatisfied need. The youths surpass a desire for satisfaction of basic needs (D. needs) and seek what Maslow refers to as the 'B' needs of becoming. They seek autonomy, respect, esteem and strive for satisfaction of conflicts that Erikson (1963) describes as foremost in adolescence. The importance of a strong sense of identity in adolescence and a positive value placed on that identity, has been emphasized by Erikson. The boys in this study long for satisfaction of basic needs yet stand at the threshold of adulthood seeking a sense of who they are and who they have been. They desire resolution of tasks defined as significant in adolescence but they do so without the foundation of successful resolution in earlier stages of development, or as Maslow might say, without satisfaction of basic needs. I believe these four youths face the challenges of adulthood without the tools that allow for healthy passage.

Reflections On The Findings of This Study

Research into the phenomenon of the adolescent sex offender exists at a rudimentary level that is typical of early efforts to acquire knowledge in newly identified areas of interest. It is important to combine various methodologies in developing knowledge in the area of adolescent sex offending. When considering prospective variables for study it seems appropriate to begin at the beginning; to learn from the phenomenon itself enough about the phenomenon to ask the right questions. A review of the existing literature and research suggests that qualitative research in the context of a rigorous methodology has not existed to make this contribution. As such, by exploring the adolescent sex offender in a qualitative analysis, I have attempted to balance the nature of the information available and stimulate a repertoire of questions extracted from the source.

Studies such as this one contribute to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. This study is unique in that it has provided the opportunity for four adolescent sex offenders to tell their stories within the context of a phenomenological research project. Their voices have now been heard. The ten themes identified provide information as to how four youths, who have become sex offenders, experience their own lives. The participants have identified many factors in their backgrounds which, when considered together, have lead them to a place in their lives which is perceived as problematic by themselves and others.

In listening to these youths it is possible to identify where their needs lie and to what extent these have been satisfied. I believe, like Ryan and Lane (1991), that their actions, in committing sexual offenses, are compensatory and that these involve an attempt to satisfy unfulfilled needs left over from the bleak childhood experiences. As such there is much to be learned from these youth as they tell their stories and identify what they've missed and what they long for. The present study provides information specifically related to these issues.

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of parent-child relations in understanding the adolescent sex offender. This area has not received much attention. This study also emphasizes quality of care as a crucial factor. The physical constitution of the family had little relevance in this study as two of the four adolescent sex offenders lived with both their parents and several siblings. The other two youths were raised as only children by single parent mothers. What emerged as common to the four participants was a poor quality of care.

Quality of care also became important in consideration of the differences in the boys' experiences related to multiple loss and trauma. Perhaps it is more in the way a traumatic event is dealt with than in it's actual happening. A child who is unsupported through loss, disappointment and crisis may experience an isolation which further intensifies the grief or fear experience. He may also repress intense associated feelings, as in Gary's example of lack of grief response to his grandmother's suicide. A traumatic event such as a painful separation, may become an emotional wound which festers through life or may heal when cared for with sensitivity.

We do not know the answer to why all poorly cared for children do not become offenders. From this study we can identify risk factors that contribute to problematic behavioral and experiential outcomes. In identifying possible risk factors it is important to recognize the interplay of meaningful factors that contribute to who a person becomes and how that person relates to the world. We cannot predict whether a child who feels fearful will discover a place of safety as he develops or whether a child who feels unloved by his parents will find love elsewhere and, thus, learn that the self is lovable. We cannot know what a child will encounter in the future that may, in some way, compensate for neglect and mistreatment in his past and counter unfortunate developmental outcomes. The present study, however, provides access to the lived experiences of four youths whose behaviors are considered unacceptable and offensive.

This study points to the consideration of emotional deprivation and unavailability of parents, peers and significant others as an important consideration. From my understanding, sexual offenses are a violation of intimacy. A lack of emotional intimacy to peers and parents in the experience of these four boys suggests that this may be a significant risk factor contributing to sexually offensive behaviors.

Assaultive behaviors, including sexual violations, frequently involve issues of power and control. For the four boys in this study, issues of helplessness and disempowerment have created a need to take control which they themselves identified; "It's just something your body wants to do." This study identifies the common thread of disempowerment in the experiences of the four youths and the strong need to regain a sense of control. Inability to control 'self' is an important consideration in sexual offenses.

Anger, for the four youths in this study, appears to be rooted in perceptions that they have been neglected, ignored, controlled and violated. Though anger is not necessarily directed at the source, as in the many examples of displaced anger that were apparent in this study, all participants indicated intense feelings of anger toward their parents. This points to the importance of parent-child relations and quality of care in considerations pertaining to the adolescent sex offender. It further emphasizes the role of anger in contributing to delinquent actions. Chris provides a good example of this in his comment, "When I would get angry I'd just go into my bedroom and listen to music and then the next day I'd go stealing." The role of anger in sexual assault is exemplified in Joe's comment, "I used to get real mad and then I'm always mad. I'd have sex play with her." The findings of this study suggest that anger (predominantly at parents) is an important consideration in studying the adolescent sex offender.

The findings of this study point to the significance of unmet needs within this population of youth. Their needs appear basic and unsatisfied. The findings of this study suggest that this has not blocked an ongoing striving for resolution of 'conflicts' that are considered typical of 'normal' adolescents. The four youths studied, seek autonomy, individuation and validation in the formation of an identity and rebel against 'blocks' to achievement. They seek to both satisfy the 'stepping stones' that were missed along the way and to 'carry on' with age-appropriate tasks. In my view, they lack the resources to be successful and appear to seek resolution in dysfunctional ways. With the consideration that a potent striving and longing exists despite a lack of developmental antecedents, it is suggested that behavioral outcomes may prove devastating not only to the individual himself but to others who are employed as possible sources of satisfaction.

The adolescent sex offender may be seeking satisfaction of some very basic yet seemingly unattainable needs. The importance of a developmental perspective and identification of unmet needs in understanding these youths has implications both for direction of future research and for treatment of this population. As childhood slips away and a youth looks toward adulthood, he sees what has been missed. He longs to fill the void. Does his desire become greater as he reaches the crossroad? Is it more important to this youth to try and make-up for lost time and 'take' what he needs to equip him for adulthood.? Perhaps he knows what he needs but not how to get it.

Implications For Treatment

The ten themes identified have implications for treatment. The treatment context of "unconditional positive regard" as suggested by Rogers (1961) holds a particular importance for children who feel unloved, unwanted or whose validation is contingent upon external criteria. Emphasis on the 'worth' of the person and self-esteem building exercises are particularly significant in youth who feel a diminished sense of self-worth and a lack of strength within. Facilitating a division between the person and the behaviors is crucial for teens labelled as 'sex offenders' and as 'bad' by themselves and others over time. Negative identities can lead to self fulfilling prophecies. As Erikson says, "If a negative identity is accepted as natural or as a final identity by teachers, judges and psychiatrists, he not infrequently invests his pride as well as his need for total orientation in becoming exactly what the careless community expects him to become." (Erikson, 1968, p.88).

Issues of power and control become important focal points of therapy for youths who take control at all costs. Empowering adolescents who feel helpless is an important goal of therapy. It is also a perceived 'power' differential between therapist and client which could serve to alienate the youth and lead to a lack of cooperation, in my view. As was identified in this study, these youths do not like authority and rebel against it. Though all therapeutic techniques that are directed at increasing self-esteem serve to empower the youth, approaches directed specifically at empowerment would seem worthwhile in youth who report a profound sense of powerlessness. Approaches that emphasize the power differential between the therapist and the client are destined to fail, from my understanding of these youths' response to authority. It is however, the case that all youths interviewed were in mandated counselling. I believe that, if therapy were not required, there would be no way to reach youth who are fearful, well defended and who cling to negative identities in lieu of none. Empowering these youths, from my perspective, does not include a choice regarding therapy. It involves the choice to take part in a meaningful way or to be present in body only.

This study emphasizes the importance of anger control and management techniques in treating this population. It also suggests that even in youths who do not appear angry and whose offenses do not appear violent or vengeful, as in the case of Chris, anger at parents can be very much a part of the essential experience. Assisting youths to understand the source of anger, to recognize generalization and displacement of anger and to develop safe outlets become important goals of therapy.

For the purpose of development of treatment goals it becomes a valuable tool, in my view, to take note of the areas of longing (desires, wishes, regrets) that are expressed by the child. In this study, areas of expression appear to indicate where deficits are the greatest. In addition specific problem areas become readily identifiable through the child's own expression of desired changes in their "I wish" statements. Listening carefully to the child's expressions of longing, can provide a direction for treatment for those therapists who believe in the importance of developmental antecedents when treating children and youths.

The identified themes of loneliness and isolation are not new to our understanding of these youth. This study emphasizes the significance of this experience to the youths themselves and emphasizes the importance of peer support in therapeutic considerations. Both as teenagers who rely heavily on peers for feedback and support, and as particularly lonely and isolated individuals, peer contact is important in therapeutic considerations of this population. For this reason, group therapy is recommended in treating adolescent sex offenders. Teaching social skills with actual practice amongst peers in the group could make a valuable contribution to youth who lack the proper tools to make and keep friends.

In addition, the importance of parent-child relations has been emphasized in this study. Lack of resolution of ongoing parent-child conflict is apparent in each of the four cases studied. Wherever feasible, families should be invited into therapy. In many instances this is an unrealistic expectation and it may be necessary for the youth to be encouraged toward total independence from family. What is apparent from this study is that even in family situations that appear beyond redemption, the child's longing persists and in reality the 'separations' are not made. The emotional bond whether functional or dysfunctional remains. For this reason family issues, whether in the presence or absence of parents, are important areas for therapeutic intervention. It may not be possible to change a circumstance but it may be possible to change a 'worldview'.

Directions For Future Research

It is not difficult to ask questions about young people who cause pain and injury to others in a sexual way. It is much harder to find any answers. Though this study represents an attempt to achieve a better understanding of these youth, many questions have arisen for myself in conducting this research. I find myself asking. "Where are the females in this picture?" Do they engage in similar sexually abusive behaviors but escape public awareness and retribution due to gender stereotyping and tolerance? I find it difficult to accept this possibility in consideration of the extreme statistical discrepancies in reported cases of female versus male offenders. Perhaps some escape notice but in consideration of the statistic that only 4% of reported cases are female it seems unfeasible that 96% are hidden. For myself a more reasonable question to ask is whether girls with similar experiences are present in another identifiable problematic population. Possible considerations might be victims of sexual abuse, individuals who are engaged in 'legal' promiscuous lifestyles and female teenage prostitutes. When a girl's experience resonates with the themes of experience identified in this study, where will we find her? What will she be doing? How will she be coping? A study comparing the qualitative aspects of experience of some of the possible female groups mentioned, with the findings of this study may provide some answers.

Research into the effectiveness of treatment is an important consideration. 'Effectiveness' is difficult to define and harder to determine. Changes such as diminished defensiveness, improved parent-child relations, increased social skills, reduction in anger response and improved self-esteem can be assessed. Longitudinal studies assessing recidivism and reporting lifestyle changes over time would be valuable in determining progress and in combating the public defeatist attitude which appears to accompany severely dysfunctional populations. On the other hand, results may also lend credence to a popular negative opinion in this regard.

Lastly, the recognition that these youths are frequently attending junior high or highschool and that many offenses occur in or around the school property, suggests the importance of researching management practices within the context of the school. Research directed at safety in the schools, teacher attitudes, and administrative directives become important considerations. Effective use of counselling professionals (school guidance counsellors) and other related staff is an important consideration. Whether the education system wishes to officially assume a role of surrogate parent or protector of other students or not, the reality remains that many teachers and school administrators face these challenges. In addition, with a mandate to 'educate' it is the reality that many of the students are not being 'educated' though bodily present, due to their preoccupation with more pressing concerns such as those voiced by Joe. He was too worried about care of his siblings and family violence to attend to school material. All boys in this study were of average or above average intelligence yet three out of four experienced academic failure. From this perspective, the adolescent sex offender becomes the business of the education system at least while he sits in the desk at school. Reduction of violence, protection of other students and educating the problem children become important issues.

CONCLUSION

The essential themes of four youths' experiences have emerged from their own accounts. The participants provide detailed and colorful 'stories' of childhoods that some would rather forget than remember. They are stories but they are very real to the story teller.

Before concluding, I would like to comment on validity and honesty of accounts in preparation for the skeptics who rightfully identify this population as prone to falsification. As noted earlier, participants showed a strong tendency to 'protect' and 'defend' their experience. The tendency is sufficiently pronounced to warrant it's own theme in the essential structure of their experience. Thus honesty of account becomes an important consideration in terms of validity of findings. It should be noted that in this study the participants hesitated to share the unpleasant material in their histories. They defended against negative 'pictures' and were more prone to create a favorable picture than an unfavorable one as this was more palatable and less painful to them. In this light, 'dishonesty' could be defined as an underestimation of problematic relationships and circumstances. For example, revealing parental shortcomings was difficult for Chris who qualified each statement with a pleasantry or explanation. Gary indicated that telling his story was difficult. He works hard to suppress the very information he was being asked to reveal. There was little pleasure in the telling for any of the participants. They would much rather have had other stories to tell, from my understanding. This perspective on honesty lends additional credibility to findings of this study. In my opinion findings are likely to be an underestimate of problem areas rather than an exaggeration. It is also noteworthy, that relating at an affective level is undesirable to youth who prefer to present a facade of bravado in defense of vulnerability. Joe's comment, that crying is a sign of weakness, and adamant statements from others that they do not show emotions, suggests that a show of affect during interviews may mean a temporary removal of deceptive defenses and an honest deep relating. Participants became emotionally involved in their tellings. When stories became too painful they resorted back to the safety of well established defenses.

Honesty in phenomenological understanding is not so much the congruence between an individual's account and the account of others or the consistency of an individual's account throughout an interview. If the participant chooses to lie about his offense, for example, it is an 'honest' reporting that the individual remained defended in relation to his involvement. As such, discrepancies in information contributed to overall findings rather than discredited them.

Historical information on file was reviewed following data gathering interviews to determine if events reported by participants were similar to information on file. The accounts were more similar than they were different. Areas that differed were mainly in parental accounts of the child as problematic rather than the home situation. Perceptions of experience belong to the perceiver and it is this 'truth' that is relevant in terms of research findings.

The four participants were interviewed to determine agreement or disagreement with the essential themes of their experience. Their responses indicated a congruence between my interpretive understanding and their own meanings. Gary indicated, "you read me like a book." Gizmo asked me to share the findings with his mother in his desire to be 'understood' by her. Chris said "exactly" on a number of occasions. Joe feels there is no point in speaking to his parents but felt a certain comfort in his comment, at least someone listened." Defensiveness was evident in some of their comments, for example, "but I'm happier now; I feel better about myself now; I have more friends since you interviewed me; Mom's getting better." There is always the possibility that things are improving for the four boys who long for a more peaceful, secure experience. They understand that their experience can grow and change. Their attentiveness to the sharing of findings speaks highly of their desire to learn and grow. There is much to be learned by these four individuals before they can realize their potential.

The themes presented are unhappy at best. In reflecting on the adjectives used I realize that I could take each one and add it's opposite, for just as a child is fearful, he is brave in his striving for relief from the fear. Though a child feels unloved and devalued he experiences indignation and anger when he experiences a violation of self. The love he holds for himself exists somewhere deep within. Though helpless he seeks control. In loneliness he desires companionship. Though bewildered he seeks answers. And in the end, despite experience which teaches otherwise, he longs for health in love, family and home. In my view, it is this perspective that provides the hope for successful treatment of adolescent sex offenders.

It is realistic to recognize the depth of the problem and to identify this population as difficult to treat. However, in my view measuring penile responses, searching for clues in intelligence, labelling offenders as social incompetents or poor students has little to do with treatment or the ultimate goal of prevention. It is my belief that the answer lies in the experience of the youth, a truth best revealed by the one who has lived it. The phenomenological approach respects the individuality of experience while seeking an empathic generalizability, a commonality in the depth of the experience.

Though developmental antecedents do not excuse abusive behavior, an efficient gathering of clues can enhance the treatment process by identifying patterns of thought and emotional reactions, as well as sensitive risk factors. Unravelling defenses and mysteries of the individual can lead to focussing treatment on trigger issues. In my view, understanding the adolescent's view of the world may lead to an application of empathy. By enabling the offender to apply empathy to himself he may learn a greater empathy for others.

The 'worlds' of four adolescents have been momentarily entered and explored. Their view of the world that they live in has been shared in the findings of this research. The work of reframing a worldview has just begun for these four youth and for others like them. If we are to help in this process and to create safer communities for ourselves and our families, it is important to acknowledge the needs of our delinquent youth even if their delinquency involves a violation that is intimately repugnant. In retrospect, I realize that part of my motivation in doing this research was to share with others my perspective that these youth are 'real' people with 'real' needs. They look like 'our' children. They 'feel' like our children. They can act like our children. They can also act in a way that is incomprehensible and demands taking responsibility and facing repercussions imposed upon them by a community that has a right to feel safe. These are severely troubled youth who hurt themselves and others around them. Protection encompasses both the youth themselves and the community in which they live. Making a start, in my view, involves a better understanding of the youth, where he has been, where he is now and where he wants to go.

As an adolescent stands at the brink of adulthood he reflects on his childhood. He looks to the past for a licence of passage. It is important to understand what he sees as he looks. For Joe, Gary, Chris and Gizmo the old picture is not a pleasant one. Perhaps the future will be brighter.

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APPENDIX

'Consent to Participate' Forms

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you are aware, your child has been asked to participate in a research project. The study is aimed at better understanding the experience of youth who have been involved in offences of a sexual nature. The researcher, Gloria Starko, is a masters level student in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology, (counselling), University of Alberta.

The process involves audiotaped interviews. Participants will be invited to describe their experience (feelings) in relation to a number of areas such as parent-child relations, peer relationships, perceptions of self and feelings regarding involvement in the offence(s).

Anonymity will be protected and a pseudonym will be used. Audiotapes will be erased once the project is completed. To further ensure confidentiality, all records will be kept in a secure place.

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any point without penalty. Provisions have been made to deal with sensitive areas (which may arise during the process) in ongoing therapy sessions.

Possible gains to participants include an in-depth exploration and understanding of their own experience. The overall research goal is to provide information which will assist in future prevention and treatment of adolescent sex offenders.

I ________________________________, have read and understand the above information.

________________________________, has my permission to participate in the research project described above. I understand that participation is voluntary and permission can be withdrawn without penalty. I understand that the interview(s) will be audiotaped.

Name and Address signed: ______________________

____________________ witnessed: ______________________

____________________ Dated: ______________________

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CONSENT FORM (participant)

This is a consent form regarding participation in a research project. The study is aimed at better understanding the experience of youth who have been involved in offences of a sexual nature. The researcher, Gloria Starko, is a masters level student in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology, (counselling), University of Alberta.

The process involves audiotaped interviews. Participants will be invited to describe their experience (feelings) in relation to a number of areas such as parent-child relations, peer relationships, perceptions of self and feelings regarding involvement in the offence(s).

Anonymity will be protected and a pseudonym (a name used to conceal real identity) will be used. Audiotapes will be erased once the project is completed. To further ensure confidentiality, all records will be kept in a secure place.

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I ________________________________, have read and understand the above information.

I, ________________________________, consent to participate in the research project described above. I understand that participation is voluntary and permission can be withdrawn without penalty. I understand that the interview(s) will be audiotaped.

Name and Address signed: ________________________

____________________ witnessed: ______________________

____________________ Dated: ________________________

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